AN

AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE

OF

MR. KEMBLE'S

Retirement from the Stage;

INCLUDING

FAREWELL ADDRESS, CRITICISMS, POEMS, &c.

SELECTED FROM VARIOUS PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS;

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DINNER GIVEN AT THE FREEMASONS' TAVERN, JUNE 27, 1817;

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF THE COMPANY PRESENT;

SPEECHES OF LORD HOLLAND, MR. KEMBLE;

MR. CAMPBELL'S ODE, &c. &c.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, AN

ESSAY,

Biographical and Critical.

EMBELLISHED WITH PLATES.

" ——You shall not be
" The grave of your deserving; Rome must know
" The value of her own."

SHAKSPEARE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN MILLER, 25, BOW-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN.

1817.

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APPENDIX.

ESSAY,

&c. &c.

IN writing an Essay, whose subject matter is closely connected with the character of an individual, it might perhaps be required of us to enter in to a minute detail concerning the person to whom we must necessarily have such frequent reference; our limits, however, forbid us, in the present instance, dwelling further on the early life or progress of Mr. Kemble's professional career, than simply to relate the leading facts and circumstances which led to, and ultimately confirmed his Theatrical and Literary reputation; yet what may be wanting in minuteness of narrative, we trust will be compensated in the accuracy of the circumstances we have collected, and now present to our readers, having received our information from sources whose truth may be relied on.

John Philip Kemble, was born at Prescot, in Lancashire, on the 1st of February, 1757. At the time of his birth, his father, Mr. Roger Kemble, was the Manager of a Company of Comedians who had a regular routine of per-

formances in Lancashire, and some of the neighbouring counties.

He received the early principles of education in the Roman Catholic seminary, at Sedgeley Park, Staffordshire, where he gave early proofs of an extraordinary taste for Literature. On this account, he was sent by his father to the University of Douay, in the year 1770, with the intent of qualifying him for one of the learned professions. During a residence there, his elocutionary powers developed themselves in a very unusual degree; particularly in recitations from the Works of Shakspeare.

Having finished his career of juvenile studies, he returned to England, and having a decided preference for the Stage, he made his appearance in Chamberlain's Company, at Wolverhampton, in the character of Theodosius, in the *Force of Love*, with tolerable success. This may be considered as his actual *debût*, although he had at so early a period as ten years old, played in his father's Company at Worcester, (with his sister, now Mrs. Siddons), the part of the Duke of York, in the Tragedy of *King Charles the First**.

His second appearance was at Wolverhampton, in the part of Bajazet, in which he gave more decided promise of those extraordinary

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See Appendix, A.

talents, which have since raised him to unrivalled eminence.

It would be uninteresting to follow Mr. Kemble at this early period of his career, through the provincial towns which he visited, previously to his engagement at Liverpool and York.

" Whilst at York, Mr. Kemble tried a new " species of entertainment in the theatre of " that city, consisting of a repetition of the " most beautiful odes from Mason, Gray, and " Collins; of the tales of Le Fevre and Maria, " from Sterne; with other pieces in prose and " verse; and in this novel and hazardous un- " dertaking, met with such approbation, that " we have ever since been over-run by crowds " of reciters, who want nothing but his talents " to be as successful as their original*."

Tate Wilkinson, the Patentee of York, having about this time taken the Edinburgh Theatre, Mr. Kemble accompanied him thither, and established his reputation among men of letters, in the composition and delivery of a Lecture on Sacred and Profane Oratory, in which he proved himself an able Critic, and an eloquent declaimer. From Edinburgh we trace him to Dublin, in the year 1782, in which city he first appeared in the character of Hamlet, and re-

* Biographia Dramatica.

mained there two seasons, increasing in popularity and estimation. In 1783, he left Dublin, and made his first appearance in London, on the 30th September of that year, at Drury-Lane Theatre, in the character of Hamlet. His performance of this character was of such unquestionable merit, that he became the object of universal praise and observation; but from the circumstance of Mr. Smith being then in possession of the chief tragic parts, Mr. Kemble was for a time prevented displaying the full extent of his abilities, until, by the retirement of that Gentleman in 1788, he became invested with absolute tragic sway, and established that fame which he has since upheld with undiminished excellence. In 1787 he married Mrs. Brereton, the widow of Mr. Brereton, daughter of Mr. Hopkins, the then Prompter of Drury-Lane Theatre; and in 1788, became a useful as well as ornamental pillar of his profession, in the character of Manager of Drury-Lane Theatre. Cotemporary testimonies in his favour are not wanting, to confirm what might well be imagined, that his taste and science would be as successfully displayed in the direction of others, as in the government of himself; and he is thus spoken of in a work of undoubted impartiality.

" In this office, which he held uninter-
" ruptedly for eight years, he amply justified

" the discernment that had placed him in it,
" by the many material improvements which he
" made in the general conduct of the prepara-
" tory business of the Stage, in the regular de-
" corum of representation, in the impartial ap-
" pointment of performers to characters suited
" to their real abilities, and in giving to all
" characters their true and appropriate cos-
" tume. The departments of the painter and
" machinist were likewise objects of his con-
" stant attention; and to his study and ex-
" ertions, the Drama is indebted for the present
" propriety and magnificence of its scenery and
" decorations. These essential improvements
" will at once give testimony to the good sense,
" the professional knowledge, and classical taste
" of their introducer, and lay our native Drama
" under great obligations to him, for having
" raised it, in truth and splendour of repre-
" sentation, far above the competition of any
" other in Europe*."

During the time of Mr Kemble's management, he did not confine himself merely to the duties of his situation, but added very considerably to the stock of dramatic pieces, both by original compositions, and also by translations and revisions of foreign and obsolete plays†. With the intervention of a short interval, Mr.

* Biographia Dramatica.

† See Appendix, B.

Kemble continued Manager till the end of the season of 1801: the following year he devoted to travelling, and having for his main object the improvement of the scenic art, he visited the cities of Paris and Madrid, where he paid unremitting attention to the practice of his brother professors in both those capitals. During his residence abroad, he received the most flattering marks of respect and attention from societies and individuals of literary character*, and formed an acquaintance with M. Talma, which has since grown into the closest intimacy. In 1803, Mr. Kemble returned to England, and having purchased a sixth share of the property in Covent-Garden Theatre, became Manager, (Mr. Lewis resigning that situation), and appeared for the first time on those boards in the character of Hamlet, on the 24th day of September, 1803.

His reception was gratifying in the extreme, and was an ample proof of his popularity and reputation as an Actor, which continued even to increase till 1808, when, on the 20th September in that year, the destructive fire took place, which in less than three hours, consumed the whole interior of the building, involving the Proprietors in incalculable loss By this deplorable catastrophe, in addition to the injury to

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* See Appendix, C.

property, humanity had to lament the loss of more than twenty lives, from the falling-in of the building near the Piazza door. Various anecdotes are afloat, as to the liberality of the late Duke of Northumberland to Mr. Kemble on this affecting occasion; but as His Grace was far above ostentation, and wished to avoid notoriety for an act which was the spontaneous offering of his friendship, he doubtless restrained the object of his patronage, from any public acknowledgment of his bounty. The particulars of this circumstance, are therefore only known to the individuals interested; and whatever idle stories may be in circulation, truth and error are so mixed up in the relation, that they ought to be entirely rejected. Mr. Kemble has himself, in the dedication to a late work, adverted to the fact, in terms which are enough for the establishment of the Duke's munificence; and the extent, which is not mentioned, could add but little to the value of the act itself*.

The new Theatre rose like magic on the ruins of the old, being entirely completed in the small space of nine months. The foundation stone of the new structure, received the high honour of being laid by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in person, as Grand Master of the Freemasons of Great Britain, attended by

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* See Appendix, D.

the Grand Lodge in ample form. Mr. Smirke, jun. was the architect, and Mr. Copeland the builder. It is not our office further to dilate on the beauty or propriety of the building, than simply to observe, that to Mr. Kemble's classical taste, the architect is somewhat indebted for many valuable suggestions in the completion of that stupendous work of art.

The opening of the Theatre took place on the 18th September, 1809, with the Tragedy of Macbeth. On the drawing up of the curtain, an unfortunate squabble, between the Proprietors and the Public, so well known by the title of the "O P Riot," (the initials of the two words, "old prices)," broke out in acts of extraordinary violence. It will be remembered, that the offence originated in the advanced price of admission, and the increased number of private boxes. Without advocating either side of the question, it is but fair to state the grounds of the dispute: the Public were incensed at what they considered a grievous innovation, and the Proprietors justified themselves, by the enormous loss they had sustained from their recent calamity, and the high price of building materials, at the time of erecting the new Theatre. The reasoning of the one party was, however, not satisfactory to the other, and the altercation continued for the period of sixty nights, when at last a compromise was effected, by the reduc-

tion of Private Boxes, to the number in 1802; by the concession of the Pit remaining at its old price; and the Proprietors being benefited by an advance of a shilling on each admission to the Boxes.

Toward the end of the season 1811-12, Mr. Kemble quitted the London Stage, for the purpose of making a professional tour in the country.

On the 11th January, 1814, being re-engaged for a term of three years, he appeared at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the character of *Coriolanus*, and was greeted with the most extraordinary and enthusiastic marks of applause by the Audience: a Laurel Crown was thrown upon the Stage, and the whole Audience rose simultaneously to welcome him. Here Mr. Kemble continued till the close of his splendid career, performing however, at intervals, in several of the Provincial Theatres. His last performance in Edinburgh, took place on Saturday, 29th of March, 1817, in the part of Macbeth; on which occasion, he delivered an Address, written by his friend Walter Scott, Esq.* His friends in that capital greeted him, for the last time, with feelings of regard similar to those which awaited him on his return to London, where, during the last season, he performed, and

* See Appendix, E.

frequently repeated many of his chief characters, until he finally closed his professional labours, on the 23d day of June, 1817, in the part of *Coriolanus;* an event accompanied by such extraordinary marks of public admiration and regard towards him, that the circumstances attending it, and the tribute of respect which followed, are thought worthy of being recorded in a subsequent part of the work.

WE have thus briefly sketched the early history of Mr. Kemble's professional life, more for the sake of conformity with what is generally expected in a memoir of a celebrated individual, than for the purpose of satisfying the curiosity of the reader on points of well ascertained fact, for which we may refer him to publications of authenticity.

The talents and execution of Mr. Kemble as an Actor, have for many years been so much the object of the Critic's pen, that it would only be repeating a "twice told tale," to enter into a minute examination of his comparative excellencies in those characters which have contributed to the establishment of his general reputation. The purport of this Essay, is briefly to enquire into the qualifications which entitle an Actor to become a standard of imitative excellence, and to shew whether Mr. Kemble pos-

sessed them in such a degree as to warrant his being considered the Founder of a School for future Students in the Art.

There seem to be three essential requisites for perfection in a Tragic Actor: the first, exclusively the gift of Nature; we mean the exterior advantages of figure and face, which Mr. Kemble possessed in a very eminent degree.

His brow was the faithful reflector of the internal workings of his mind; there was a flexibility of muscle, true to the expression of the varied emotions of his soul. Although peculiarly adapted for the expression of the noble and heroic, yet there was a melancholy sentimental composure of feature, which gave the fullest tone to the delineation of manly sorrow. It cannot be denied, that his figure, however just in symmetry, had the appearance of restraint, and gave us the idea, that it would cease to be pliant, if it were required to be thrown into more familiar positions; but it should be remembered, that this is only a contemplated defect; his form did all that he demanded of it, in that walk of the Drama which he made his peculiar province, and when he did draw upon it for co-operation in the exhibition of a character, it was abundantly obedient.

There was something so pre-eminently expressive, both in Mr. Kemble's look and attitude, that it would frequently seem unneces-

sary for him to increase the effect, by the aid of speech. Let us call to mind, for instance, his proud yet conciliating deportment in the Volscian hall. Does it not tell his story ere his tongue betrays it? We there discern at once an expression of deeply offended pride—of towering native dignity, rendered still more lofty by the self-imposed act of seeking alliance with an inveterate enemy, and after all, there is a look indicating (not remorse), but something like surprize, at finding himself in a situation not wholly to be justified by circumstances.

This is only one of the many instances where the exterior of the Actor is almost exclusively called into play; not that the mental faculties are to be idle at the moment the effect is produced, but their fullest energy would be unavailing, if the personal accompaniment were not physically capable of receiving the impression, and of thence becoming in an instant, strikingly descriptive of the situation represented.

The next requisite which it seems essentially necessary for an Actor to possess, is a good understanding; and to this, perhaps, the subject of this Essay was more indebted for the success he obtained, than even for the personal qualifications already touched upon. The discriminating judgment of Mr. Kemble, not only assisted him in the closet, in developing the true meaning of an Author's text, but it enabled him

on the stage, to give the due and distinguishing characteristic of each peculiar passage. It is his merit universally, to identify correctly, and preserve faithfully throughout the dramatic existence of every character he represented.

He always takes care,

"Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum."

It may be, and doubtless is, frequently objected, that the consequence of this studious discernment, is to fetter genius, and to create too great a sameness in the exertions of the artist. It is very true, that if this discriminating quality be not accompanied with an equally vigorous power of exhibition; then, indeed, the judgment would only have the effect of preventing extravagance, and the Actor would be tame and uninteresting. In such a case, the wild excursions of genius might be preferable to the repressed acting of a judicious, but ineffective performer; but Mr. Kemble left us nothing to regret, either in the fullness and chastity of his conception, or in the vigour and truth of his expression. He took care never to give a forced construction to a passage, or an overstrained peculiarity to any single beauty. Genius may be, and indeed frequently is, powerfully manifested in a start, a cadence, or a pause, but each must have its limited extent, or the charm is lost: the minutest point beyond pro-

priety, disorganizes the whole. He had doubtless experienced, what all have witnessed, that the same gesture, start, or pause, will at one time have the whole magical effect desired; and that at another, owing to some minute indescribable defect in expression, it passes totally unobserved, or comparatively ineffective: he always endured to the end, and never sacrificed one part of a representation for the sake of another; yet was he not deficient in producing the effect of these sudden transitions, when he considered it safe to display them. He could occasionally shew the force of contrast in his emotions, to a most wonderful extent; witness the vivid change from the agony of suspicion to the relief of hope, in Posthumus, when tortured by Iachimo's proof of Imogen's infidelity, he eagerly catches at the bare suggestion of his friend Philario, that the ring might have been stolen by her women, and half interrupting him, exclaims,

"Aye, very true!"

If it be surmised that Mr. Kemble, from his strict attention to magnificence in deportment, which was his proud peculiarity, was thereby less effective in the delivery of passages, or even in the working up of entire scenes, let us call to mind his interview with Cassius, where he

relates the circumstance of the death of Portia: could any thing exceed the melancholy composure, the manly resignation, with which he delivered the three words,

"Portia is dead!"

In a common Actor, these words would but convey the relation of a single fact!—melancholy indeed, and therefore affecting;—but as delivered by Mr. Kemble, they are teeming with electric effect.

The manner with which he accompanies these accents, is (as applicable to his own situation) strongly indicative of a mind lately agonized at the intelligence conveyed to it, yet chastened by the philosophy with which his soul was deeply embued; as relating to Cassius, it was at once a satisfactory corrective answer to the impatient zeal with which he doubtingly sought to be informed of the fact. The ardent temper of Cassius is manifested at this period under the most winning and engaging circumstances; immediately consequent to a reconciliation with his dearest friend, whom he had somewhat unjustifiably endeavoured to provoke, he hears of an event, which he considers as destructive of that friend's future happiness. We immediately enter into the feelings of compunction which must have agitated him, and willingly go along with

him in the burst of affectionate solicitude, which he displays in his enquiries after the truth of the report; but how much more are we interested, how readily do we abandon our sympathy with Cassius, to be sharers in the noble feeling of heroic resignation to the decrees of Fate, which Brutus, represented by Mr. Kemble, so powerfully displays? We consider this as one of the most extraordinary effects, produced perhaps more independently of the Author from qualities purely in possession of the Actor, than any we remember. They are such, as so entirely surprise us, that our wonder is immediately followed by a self-investigation, whether there be not something in the art itself not to be accounted for; some magic in the illusion, which reason cannot reconcile. The idea is but transitory, for judgment comes in aid of imagination, and informs us, that no display of genius, however striking, is unattainable, or even difficult, to a mind originally gifted as Mr. Kemble's, enlarged, ennobled, and refined, by continued cultivated taste, and indefatigable labour.

In giving these instances of sudden effect, as produced by Mr. Kemble, we have almost precluded ourselves from the solution of the question, whether he has, or has not, the third requisite, so necessary to an eminent Actor—sen-

sibility, or the power to receive impressions, and the disposition to be quickly affected by the passions?

We have already shewn that he has full claim to such a possession. Neither his person nor his understanding alone, would otherwise have enabled him to produce the effects already instanced: his heart must have been composed of the right material, or his judgment would have left him bankrupt.

Are we not bound to confess, that he indisputably held the master-key of our affections, not using it indeed too frequently, lest it should lose its power; but when he did unloose them, were they not wholly resigned to whatever degree of sensation he chose them to endure?

It were beyond the limits of a few pages, dedicated to such a subject, beyond also the critical talents of the Author, to enter minutely into the various instances of depicted feeling, which the Public have so often witnessed from Mr. Kemble; but to renew the memory of it, let them call to mind his Penruddock. Was not his heart so entirely possessed with the situation of him he represented, that we can scarcely conceive any thing in life to equal the deep intensity of his sorrow? His mind was a picture of ungovernable feeling preying upon itself. His assumption of melancholy, more poignant than reality, appeared to be stronger from

habit and endurance. Yet was his misery dignified throughout; nor did it lose any thing of sympathy in the required admiration of its elegance. On his first appearance in the play, he looks what he afterwards proves to be, the care-worn philosophic recluse; not of morbid sensibility or misanthropic selfishness, but the ill-starred victim of conflicting circumstances, withdrawing from the world, which the acuteness of bitter remembrance forbade him to enjoy; possessed of a heart severe and cruel to himself, yet teeming with benevolence to his species.

If the display of other passions be required to entitle him to the merit of possessing sensibility in an ample degree, let us revert to his late performance of Hotspur. Towards the close of life, in the decline of physical strength, at a time when even vanity, that powerful stimulant, failed in urging him to continue his professional exertions, he ventured to represent the youthful and intemperate warrior; and so powerfully did he pourtray the attributes of the character, that the illusion was complete; and what was wanting in corporeal strength of muscle, was recompensed by an increase of intellectual vigour.

His Coriolanus too:—here we might drop our pen, and say our task is ended, with the bare mention of that name. Nothing new can be said of that which has exhausted praise; but

there are persons whose judgments are so warped by prejudice or conceit, that though they concur in the general acknowledgment, they seek an excuse for coinciding, and endeavour to detract from merit, though they confess its efficacy. By some such men it is not unfrequent to hear it asserted, that the cause of Mr. Kemble's excellence in this character, is his close approximation to it in real life. Not to deny the fact, which however we could do, (for we believe the cast of Mr. Kemble's mind to be as unlike that of the stern unyielding Roman, as it is to any other of his personations); yet they know but little of the art, who imagine that the display of familiarity in a part, arises solely from a correspondent natural disposition in the Actor; they ought to be informed, that *ease* is the most difficult of attainment, and that when most observable, it is the sure result of deep study, corrected taste, and finished execution.

There is no doubt but that Coriolanus was one of the first, if not decidedly the best, of Mr. Kemble's performances; but its merits had a much firmer foundation than natural assimilation. They were the fruits of a highly cultivated classical taste. He had inhaled from the pages of the ancient Poets and Historians, the lofty inspiration of Roman dignity; and identifying himself in imagination with the hero of Corioli.

he wholly abandoned the consciousness of his actual self, and thought, looked, and breathed, the scornful conqueror, the rejected consul, or relenting patriot of Roman origin and patrician blood.

Mr. Kemble has been thought by some, to carry his studies of grandeur, grace, and elegance, too generally throughout his performances, and by his precision of style, to weaken the *natural* effect of passages, whose aim it is to go directly to the heart, not having time to wait for attendant artificial beauties.

Before we try the truth of this opinion, it may not be amiss to enquire into what is now generally termed "natural acting;" and to see whether they who have the term so much at command, do not imagine that there is a mysterious charm in the combination of the words, which their real intrinsic import will not convey. Nature herself is so much an object of admiration, that to convert it into an epithet, is necessarily to attach a beauty to the subject it is coupled with: but before we blindly subscribe to the preference given to what is designated natural acting, let us be sure that we understand the term aright, and not fall into the vulgar error, that giving rules to original genius, is detracting from its spirit.

If by natural acting, is meant, the representing characters literally as they would be in

nature, that is, in reality, with all the peculiarities both of mind and person, which might possibly belong to them in life, and that to make a faithful portrait, such a drawing is requisite; then must we wholly dissent from a theory, which, in practice, would find an apology for extravagance, under the specious appearance of truth.

Playing, after all, is an art, and must be studied as such: the science lies in exhibiting Nature, not with perfect truth, but mellowed, or heightened, so as to beget an admiration for the fiction which reality does not deserve. It would be no gratification to see a real king or countryman upon the stage, speaking in language suitable to their separate situations in life; the charm lies in seeing a man who is neither the one nor the other, adapting his mind and features to such a personation; and the more distant we know his real character to be from that he is assuming, the greater is his merit, and the more we applaud his art in the concealment.

"Artis est celare artem."

Nature may be copied too closely, and she will then disgust. A young Actor, of modern note, (whose name, for his own sake, need not be mentioned), in representing the death of a character, (an inference by no means deducible from the Author), hit upon the expedient of holding a piece of sponge in his mouth, full of some red

liquid, which he occasionally pressed, thereby intending to convey the idea to the audience, that the death he was feigning was occasioned by the breakingof a blood-vessel.

Monstrous as this may appear, it did occur, and no revolting feeling was discernible in the audience at the exhibition. If such scenes are to be permitted, where is the required approximation to Nature to stop? The truth is, that the advocates for natural representation, forget what Mr. Kemble always bore in mind, that it is the best part of Nature only, which should be faithfully given; that stooping to represent the common defects of common life, either in person or action, degrades the character and the art, and only makes that too palpable, which even in reality had better be concealed.

The truth is, that the Drama itself, (particularly Tragedy), is not, and never can be, the representation of real life; it must only not be inconsistent with it. The situations of the characters are generally not such as do happen, but such as may in possibility occur; the feelings and sentiments expressed, are correspondently enhanced in force or dignity; and would it not be highly inconsistent, and wholly destructive of keeping in the picture, if in situations of romantic interest, exalted sentiments were to be delivered in the same tone and manner as

familiar conversation in actual human intercourse?

While we are thus endeavouring to try the truth of a theory by the force of ridicule, we must be understood as only assailing the principle, from its liability to abuse. Nature, we know, must be imitated, and truly; but the Actor, like the Artist, should chuse his subjects properly. If his studies are from Nature, he should take her in her best attire, whether simple, or adorned: she must also have endowed him with the fullest powers of receiving and exhibiting a faithful copy of her countenance; on this basis he must add a superstructure of art, composed and ornamented agreeably to the best rules of intellectual architecture.

That the subject of this Essay was thus highly gifted, we hesitate not to pronounce;—that, with a magnificent expression of countenance, and grandeur of form, he united a correspondent tone of thought and feeling;—that, from his judgment, taste, and genius, disp'ayed with continued success through a brilliant professional life, we are bound to consider him as a master of his art;—and that so splendid a combination of acquirements must entitle, to an inscription on the tablet of Fame, the name of KEMBLE.

NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

On the evening of the 25th October, 1816, Mr. Kemble commenced his last season of performance, in the character of Cato. Had any thing been wanting to revive those feelings of admiration which the public mind had fostered in his absence, he could not perhaps have selected a character which more immediately tended to refresh those remembrances than the one in question, in which he is allowed on all hands to stand unrivalled and alone. The merits of this performance have been so frequently the subject of critical approbation, that any extract from the journals of the day, would merely be a repetition of the public testimony in its favour, and which even repetition could not strengthen. It is only necessary to observe, that on this occasion there was no abatement or relaxation in the energies of the mental agent, or in the full investiture of the character, as to outward personation. He was, as he had ever been, the stern, severe, yet philosophic Cato; and the illusion was nearly as

complete, as if the inflexible Roman's spirit had been again incorporated, for the purposes of dramatic action.

The following is a correct List of the Characters sustained by Mr. Kemble during the last season of his acting, which finally terminated on the 23d June, by his glorious and high-wrought portraiture of the proud unyielding Coriolanus.

1816.

Oct.	25.	Cato.
	28.	Coriolanus.
	31.	Coriolanus.
Nov.	2.	The Stranger.
	4.	Coriolanus.
	7.	Pierre.
	9.	Coriolanus.
	15.	Brutus.
	19.	Coriolanus.
	22.	Lord Townley.
	26.	Lord Townley.
Nov.	28.	Coriolanus.
	30.	Pierre.
Dec.	3.	King John.
	5.	King John.
	7.	King John.
	9.	Brutus.
	12.	King John.
	14.	King John.
	17.	Penruddock.
	19.	Coriolanus.

1817.

April	22.	King John.
	24.	The Stranger.
	26.	Coriolanus.
	29.	Brutus.
May	1.	The Stranger.
	6.	Brutus.
	8.	Penruddock.
	10.	Coriolanus.

May 13. Hotspur.
15. Cato.
17. Brutus.
20. Penruddock.
21. Hamlet.
22. Zanga.
23. Coriolanus.
27. Cardinal Wolsey.
29. Octavian.
30. Leonatus Posthumus.
31. Brutus.
June 2. Cardinal Wolsey.
3. Hotspur.
(Benefit of Mr. Young).
4. Cato.
5. Macbeth.
(Benefit of Mr. C. Kemble).

June 7. The Stranger.
(Benefit of Miss O'Neill).
9. Brutus.
11. Hamlet.
(Benefit of Miss Stephens).
14. King John.
16. Hamlet.
17. Cardinal Wolsey.
(Benefit of Mr. Farley).
19. Brutus.
(Benefit of Mrs. Gibbs).
20. Penruddock.
(Benefit of Mr. Blanchard).
21. The Stranger.
*23. Coriolanus.

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* See Appendix, F.

The announcement of the last appearance of such a man, and in such a character, was an attraction of so peculiar a nature, as at once to command the attendance of a large proportion of the talent and splendour of a London Audience, and yet at the same time to deter the general frequenters of the Theatre from attempting to gain admittance, from the anticipation that universally prevailed, of the impossibility of obtaining seats. The whole of the Boxes had been taken a fortnight previously; and in order to gratify the enthusiastic admirers of Mr. Kemble, who thronged to the Box-office, impatient in their demands for seats in front of the house beyond all precedent, the Orchestra was invaded by persons of the first rank and literary ability, amongst the latter of whom was M. Talma.

The unanimous testimony of the daily journalists will perhaps afford the highest criterion of the merits of this performance, and of the sensation of the public mind on the occasion, and they are therefore extracted and faithfully given; but we must be allowed to add our tribute of homage, to the general offering of admiration and condolence which alternately affected the audience, as they caught, and dwelt upon those brilliant touches of genius, taste, and judgment, which Mr. Kemble produced in the execution of this, perhaps, his most finished effort; feeling, at the same time, obliged to chasten their

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"I have appeared before you for the last time. This night closes my long professional life. (*Interruption of "No, no."*) I am so much agitated, that I cannot express with any tolerable propriety what I wish to say. I feared, indeed, that I should not be able to take my leave of you with sufficient fortitude,—composure, I mean,—and had intended to withdraw myself from before you in silence; (*Here Mr. Kemble paused, and was for sometime unable to resume his speech.*)—but I suffered myself to be persuaded, that, if it were only from old custom, some little parting word would be expected from me on this occasion.—(*Long continued bursts of applause. Mr. Kemble, with encreased emotion, proceeded.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, I entreat you to believe, that, whatever abilities I have possessed,—either as an Actor, in the performance of the characters allotted to me,—or as a Manager, in endeavouring at a union of propriety and splendour in the representation of our best plays, and particularly of those of the divine Shakspeare,—(*Enthusiastic plaudits and shouts.*)—I entreat you to believe, that all my labours, all my studies, whatever they have been, have been made delightful to me, by the approbation with which you have been pleased constantly to reward them.—(*After repeated applauses, Mr. Kemble, hardly able to master his emotions, continued.*) I beg you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to accept my thanks for the great kindness you have invariably shewn me, from the first night I became a candidate for public favour, down to this—(*Here Mr. Kemble paused an instant.*)—painful moment of my parting with you.—(*It is impossible to describe the mingled feelings of the audience at the close of this sentence: Mr. Kemble became totally overpowered, and was only able to add in a smothered, but deeply penetrating, tone.*)—I must take my leave at once. —Ladies and Gentlemen, I most respectfully bid you a long, and an unwilling, farewell!"

At the moment of his withdrawing, a Scroll,

exuberant delight by the recollection, that the mental treat they were then enjoying, was to be a last repast. This painful conviction was indeed so prevalent, that enthusiasm got the better of delicacy, and on the dropping of the curtain, nothing was to be heard but shouts of, "No farewell! No farewell from Kemble!"—During the exhibition of this influence, Mr. Kemble came forward, evidently under the most heart-rending sensations of gratitude and grief. These he controuled with as much fortitude as he could command; but there is a manifestation of kindness so overwhelming, that no heroism, however true, can stand up against it. Mr. Kemble was obliged in part to yield to this influence, and in the intervals of corrected feeling, unaffectedly began his Address by this regretted truth: "I have now appeared before you for the last time; this night closes my professional life." At this moment the impulse above alluded to, became more ardently displayed, and cries of, "No! No!" prevented for a time the progress of Mr. Kemble's speech. As some part, however, of the audience, more judicious than the rest, considered that his situation would thus be rendered doubly painful, tranquillity was at last restored, and he continued his Address, in the following words:

traced on a piece of elegantly ornamented white satin, to which a laurel crown was attached, was passed by a gentleman in the Pit to M. Talma, with a request that he would hand it over to Mr. Kemble. This however was not effected in time, and consequently the Scroll, of which the following is a copy, remained upon the Stage.

To John Philip Kemble, Esq. of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden.

SIR,

AFTER having so long received from the display of your eminent abilities, the greatest degree of gratification and instruction, which the highest class of histrionic representation could bestow, we think upon the near approach of your intended farewell to the Stage, with sentiments of deep concern, and if possible, an increase of respect. In justice to the interests of the Drama, and our own feelings, we would fain postpone the moment of a separation so painful. Fitted by the endowments of Nature, and by classical acquirements, by high association and the honourable ambition of excellence, you have, for upwards of thirty years, dignified the profession of an Actor, by your private conduct and public exertions in the British Capital. We beheld, in your personification, the spirit of history and poetry united. In embodying the characters of Shakespeare and our other dramatic writers, you were not contented to revive an outward show of their greatness alone. The splendour of an antique costume—the helmet and armour—the crown and sceptre, all that pertains to the insignia of command, are easily assumed. When you appeared, the habit and the man were, as soul and body. The age

and country, in which we live, were forgotten. Time rolled back a long succession of centuries. The grave gave up its illustrious dead. Cities and nations long passed away, re-appeared; and the elder brothers of renown, the heroes and statesmen, the sages and monarchs of other years, girt in the brightness of their shadowy glory, lived and loved, and fought, and bled, before us. We beheld in you, not only their varying looks and gestures, their proud march and grandeur of demeanour; but the elevated tone of their mind, and the flame of their passions. We mean not here to enumerate the various characters in which you have shone as the light of your era: but we may be allowed to say, that *you excelled in that which was most excellent;* that wherever the grandeur of an exalted mind was united with majesty of person; wherever the noblest organ was required for the noblest expression; wherever Nature, holding up the mould of character, called for an impression from the most precious of metals, there she looked to KEMBLE as her gold; there you shone with pre-eminent lustre. In the austere dignity of *Cato*, the stern patriotism of *Brutus*, the fiery bearing of *Coriolanus*, and the mad intoxication of *Alexander*, you transported your audience in imagination, alternately to Greece, Rome, or Babylon. Seconded by the well-painted illusion of local scenery, you seemed every where in your native city; every where contemporary with the august edifices of the ancient world. In you, some of those great characters lived, and we cannot conceal our apprehensions, that, when you withdraw, we shall lose sight of them for a long time, and, as life is short, perhaps for ever. In expressing this sentiment, we feel a warm respect for every Actor of genius. A mind like yours, would be wounded by any compliment that was not founded in the

most liberal sense of general desert. It is an additional merit in you to have obtained distinction in an age of refinement, and from a public qualified to appreciate your powers. A small light shines in darkness; but you have flourished amidst a circle of generous competitors for fame, whose various abilities we admired, and in whose well-earned applause we proudly join. They behold in the honours which your country pays to you, the permanence of that celebrity which they have already so deservedly acquired, and a sure pledge of the future honours which await upon the close of their professional career. We, therefore, earnestly entreat, that you will not at once deprive the public of their gratification, and the stage of your support. We entreat of you not to take your final leave on the night named for your last performance. All we ask, is, that you will consent to perform a few nights each season, so long as your health will permit. We adjure you to grant this request, by your own fame, an object which is not more dear to you than it is to us; and we confidently rely upon your respect for public opinion, that you will not cover us with the regret of a refusal. We have spared the annexation of signatures as inadequate and unnecessary, even if our numbers and restricted limits permitted that form. The pealing applause of the audience, each night of your performance, *and the united voice which accompanies this*, are the best attestation of the public sentiment.

Although the contents of the foregoing had not been communicated to the audience, they readily caught its meaning, and impatient that the object of the address should not continue longer ignorant of the honours that awaited him, the Manager was loudly called for; when

Mr. Fawcett made his appearance, and taking up the Wreath and the Scroll, addressed himself to the House as follows:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"I can only understand these to have been intended as a compliment to Mr. Kemble. If it is your pleasure to depute me to present them to that Gentleman, you impose upon me one of the most delightful tasks it has ever fallen to my lot to perform."

Whilst these mixed feelings of respect and regret were prevailing before the curtain, they were still more powerfully pourtrayed on the countenances, and in the hearts of Mr. Kemble's professional associates behind the scenes. All were contending to be foremost in their expressions of kind condolence; and eager to retain some memorial of their long-cherished love and admiration of him, earnestly solicited some trifling article of his attire, which might strengthen the remembrance of this interesting occasion.

Mr. Mathews, who, though in a different walk of the drama, is as well calculated, from his knowledge of the art, to appreciate the merits of a tragic actor, as any of the most accomplished in the profession, and with this discriminating quality, had ever been an unfeigned and still increasing admirer of Mr. Kemble's theatrical talent, received from his

hands the gift of his sandals; which gave birth to this very pointed witticism: "Proud as I am, (said he), to have Mr. Kemble's sandals, I can never hope to tread in his shoes."

Miss Bristow obtained the handkerchief Mr. Kemble had used that evening on the stage, still wet with the overflowings of a grateful heart, which she playfully promised to keep more faithfully than Desdemona, and vowed that the tears which hallowed it, should act as an embalming spirit to preserve it to posterity. On Mr. Kemble's leaving the Theatre, the stage entrance was filled up by all ranks of the Dramatic Corps, anxious to offer a last salutation to their veteran Commander; while the outside of the door was thronged by individuals of all descriptions, eager to catch a last glance of their tried and favourite tragedian.

The papers of the following day, after stating the transactions of the evening, to which we have already adverted, were unanimous in their approbation of the night's performance; and as their concurrence is perhaps the surest test of truth, the following articles are extracted from those which are best calculated to be the echo of the public taste.

FROM THE MORNING CHRONICLE,
JUNE 24.

Mr. Kemble performed last night for his benefit, and took leave of the public in the character of *Coriolanus*. The departure from the Stage of a Gentleman, to whose classical taste and unwearied assiduity in the improvement of the Stage, it is so deeply indebted; whose private life is as honourable, as his talents, which have shed so much lustre upon that profession of which he is the ornament, were transcendent, is an event of no ordinary interest. The crowds whom it attracted to the Theatre, were, notwithstanding the extreme heat of the weather, very great; the avenues were crowded at an early hour, and after the opening of the doors, the House was instantly filled. One sentiment seemed to pervade the admiring thousands who assembled to catch the parting rays of that effulgence which was no more to appear above the horizon; to look, for the last time, upon that departing splendour which was to be veiled from their view for ever. Mr. Kemble was greeted by a reception respectful and gratifying in the extreme; the House simultaneously rose to welcome his entrance, and the reiterated thunders of their salutations, for a considerable time arrested the progress of the play. Every passage, during the performance, which could admit of application to the theatrical honours of Kemble, was eagerly caught up, and loudly noticed.

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When the enthusiastic applause which followed the Address, his truly affecting delivery of which was interrupted by the strong agitations of his feelings, and by the cheers of the Audience, had subsided; when we saw one of the sublimest sources of our "harmless plea-

sure" for ever closed, we then felt in its full force the melancholy regret inspired by eternal separation from an old and valued friend; and unquestionable proofs were displayed, that the like sense of the severity of that loss was universal.

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We lament his retirement the more, it being in our judgments, (though we presume not to question the superior right and fitness of Mr. Kemble to decide for himself), evidently premature, with reference to his admirable abilities; for they have not yet begun to wane;—sickness may have made some impression upon his once athletic frame, but they have lost none of their former vigour and freshness. His bodily strength is, doubtless, much diminished: we did not, however, go to the Theatre, to see Kemble bounding with the elasticity of a fencing-master; to witness in him, "perfections that consist in bones and nerves," but the collected and penetrating beams of strong intelligence, which were transmitted through his every movement of body, his every modulation of voice, and his every alteration of feature; and those characteristic and indefinable touches, that disclosed to the view of the spectator the most latent dispositions of the heart. If his corporeal powers are not precisely what they have once been, his mental are; and, as Cicero observes, "*non viribus aut velocitatibus aut celeritate corporum res magnæ geruntur.*" We feel too much respect for Mr. Kemble, and too warm an interest in his fame, to wish his stay to be protracted until his performances should become painful reminiscences of past superiority; but to such a decay of his faculties, his recent excellence in *Hotspur*, the repetition of which was unanimously called for, alone satisfactorily evinces, that there exists no approximation. To the style of

Kemble's acting, were we required to apply that epithet, which seems to us most peculiarly appropriate, we should say that it was highly poetical, for it breathed all the lofty inspiration, it was animated by all the impassioned but tempered energy, it exhibited all the eloquent characters of intellectual grace, it bore all the luxuriant but unoppressive richness, it embodied the grandest conceptions with all the truth, boldness, and simplicity discoverable in the noblest effusions of poetry, or the most elaborate studies of the sculptor. To take as a subject for histrionic painting, the first exhibition of natural passion that offers itself, and to produce a tolerable copy of its most prominent features in all their unmitigated hardness, is a work whose difficulties may be confidently encountered by second-rate ability; but to select from the forms of Nature, whatsoever is most beautiful and magnificent, and to compose a great, a well-connected, and an expressive design, demands other talents than those of mere imitation. It is only by the co-operation of a refined taste, a solid judgment, and a creative imagination, that the materials which observation has collected, can be formed into illustrations of tragic poetry; reflecting, as they ought to do, the highest attributes of the soul. Here it is that Kemble stands superior. It is not only in the fidelity and force with which he described the gradual progression, the full violence, and the minutest manifestations of the passions; but in the consummate skill with which he reconciled the utmost vehemence of emotion with the most charming suavity of expression, that we recognized the hand of a master, whose execution evinced a deep and a perfect knowledge of his art.

In viewing the fine performances of Kemble, we have felt the same kind of pleasure, and have experienced a renovation of the same pleasing train of ideas, into which we were led while we gazed upon the immortal glories

of the Apollo or the Laocoon. The lines of his finished pictures of human character, had all the well-defined firmness of those impressed by the graver, without hardness; and all the graceful flow and freedom of those traced by the needle, without the least carelessness. While depicting in the most powerful manner possible, the fiercest rage, the bitterest hatred, or the wildest desperation of a perturbed spirit—while depicting, in short, the "very whirlwind of passion," he was always at a distance from the confines of extravagance; he was always careful to "beget a temperance that (might) give it smoothness." His acting was the finest exemplification conceivable of the truth, that distortion of visage and writhing of limb are ineffective in proportion as they are outrageous; that eternal starts, and chafings, and restlessness, are significant of littleness and imbecility only; that all such ingenuities are wretched substitutes for essential expression, and are, to adopt the language of La Rochefoucault, "mysteries of the body, to conceal the defects of the mind." To this, the manner of Kemble was directly opposed. In all his numerous representations, there were to be remarked no laborious effort, no painful tension of his faculties, no search after extrinsical embellishment, or false and conceited contrast. Every thing had its distinct meaning—every look, every tone, every gesture, were impressive, not only in itself, but, moreover, because they all converged to one point—they were all determined by, and had reference to, one pervading idea, which governed and influenced the whole.

We could dwell with infinite satisfaction upon his exquisite delineation of the many characters with which he has completely identified himself; but of some of these we may observe, that they must be considered, now that he has ceased to impart life and animation to them, as lost to the stage; their resuscitation may be wished, but

cannot be hoped for. It may be very confidently predicted, that the ancient warrior and sage will not find, while the recollection of Kemble shall remain unimpaired, even a tolerable representative. It is surely impossible for the imagination to form more sublime and poetical conceptions of whatever was most heroical in the meridian greatness of Rome, than the *Brutus*, the *Cato*, and the *Coriolanus* of that great actor. In each of the two former, the steady elevation of a noble soul feeling misfortunes with a sense as keen as that of other men, but by its strong resolutions subduing the ordinary emotions of distress; whose inflexible virtue no self-advantage can corrupt, no menaces can intimidate; whose every action bespeaks a dignified consciousness of unshaken rectitude; —and, in the latter, the martial air, the patrician haughtiness, the impetuous vehemence, and the towering superiority of the valiant soldier, were pourtrayed with a depth of feeling, a sustained grandeur, and an astonishing power of expression, which defy competition, and challenge the severest scrutiny of criticism. But we must close these remarks, which, if we have been led on to extend beyond our usual limits, it has been by the pleasure with which we entered upon the duty, as journalists, of rendering to the public and private character of such a man, a warm and merited tribute of respect and admiration. We respectfully take our leave of Mr. Kemble, by heartily wishing that he may live long to wear the laurels with which he is decorated, and which, by a long and brilliant career of professional excellence, he has so nobly won; that he may be attended in his retreat by uninterrupted happiness; and that "*propter opes et copias et dignitatem (suam) tolerabiliorem senectutem videri**."

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* Cicero.

FROM THE SUN,

JUNE 24.

THE retirement of such an Actor as Mr. Kemble from public life, constitutes such an epocha in the dramatic annals of this country, as demands a particular notice. The writer of this article was present at the first appearance of Mr. Kemble on the London Stage, when he came forward in the part of *Hamlet*.—The manly dignity of his form, the marking expressions of his features, the grace of his demeanour, his evidently minute study of the text, and the *tout ensemble* of his performance, made a powerful impression upon the public mind.—Coming soon after the immortal Garrick, whose spirit, energy, ease, truth, feeling, and nature, seemed to have identified in the public mind, every character which he represented, with the original conception of the author, Mr. Kemble had an arduous task to perform. There were certainly great peculiarities in his acting at first, and the whole seemed to be rather marked by the nicety of study than the vivid spirit of nature and strong ambition; but those peculiarities gradually wore away. It was found that he was an Actor of no common powers, and no ordinary attainments. At length he reached the height of his art, and without an invidious allusion to any other members of his profession, it must be acknowledged that he has hitherto held possession of the theatrical throne without a rival to dispute his rightful claim. It seems to have been Mr. Kemble's ambition to display, with all possible grandeur, the works of our great Dramatic Bard, as well as his aim to distinguish himself chiefly in the characters designed by that unrivalled poet. In this aim he has succeeded; for whatever merit he has

shewn in parts formed by other writers, it is generally acknowledged, that his excellence was principally apparent in the works of Shakspeare. But it is not merely for giving all due honour to our immortal Bard, or for his merit as an Actor, that Mr. Kemble is entitled to public admiration and gratitude, for he also most assiduously and most successfully endeavoured to improve the British Stage, by the introduction of the *Costume* of all ages, as far as it was possible for it to be ascertained, and to strengthen the illusions of the drama, by the utmost display of scenic beauty, and grandeur. Nor is this all. His classical attainments, his industrious research, his penetrating judgment, his extensive experience, and his indefatigable zeal for the honour of his art, have induced him to explore the master-pieces of our dramatic poets, and to restore the text to its original purity. In private life, with high qualities, and with only those occasional lapses, which invariably characterise our nature, he has risen into the best society which this country has possessed, where his varied knowledge, his urbanity, and the refinement of his manners, have always placed him upon an acceptable level.—But it is now time to turn to the painful duty of recording the final theatrical exit of this great Actor, last night,—a night appropriated to his pecuniary interest, but incalculably more to his public honour. On this occasion, he came forward in the character of *Coriolanus*, a character in which, according to the general suffrage, he exhibited pre-eminent merit.—It is impossible for us to present a faint idea to our readers of the heart-felt esteem and admiration, which seemed universally to animate the Audience, who completely filled the House, the orchestra having been laid into the boxes. This zealous and universal testimony of respect and admiration accompanied him throughout his

performance, and broke forth on every occasion, in which any passage of the play could be connected with his character and situation. At length the curtain dropped, as he was prostrate in scenic death at that period. Mr. Kemble, after a short pause in his dressing-room, came forward again in the attire of the hero of the play. Here the general acclamations were resumed, but in a manner that we never witnessed before, in all the long course of our theatrical experience. It seemed as if all hands struck in unison by a resistless instinct, and, certainly, never were military movements executed with more precision. It is impossible to describe the effect. Several moments passed before there was any chance of silence, that the last words of Mr. Kemble might be generally heard.

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We should observe, that during Mr. Kemble's speech, in all references to his intended departure from the stage, there was a loud and universal cry of "No! No!" —but he had finally resolved.—Thus closed the public life of a Gentleman, who was the chief ornament of the Stage, in his province, for upwards of thirty years; and, who, overcome by the applause of the Audience, and the excess of his own sensibility, might well have exclaimed in the words of Lord Lyttelton, as delivered by Quin, on the death of his friend Thomson,

> "——— forgive this falling tear,
> "Alas! I feel I am *no Actor* here!"

We feel some pleasure in stating, that many friends of Mr. Kemble attended him in his dressing-room, after he had finally quitted the Stage, in order to testify their esteem and regard, and to express their hope, that he

had recovered from the fatigue of his performance, and the agitation of his feelings; among whom were Earl Percy, Lord William Gordon, Sir Thomas Lawrence, M. Talma, &c. &c. &c.; and we must add, that we never saw him perform the character of *Coriolanus* with more animation, strength, and spirit, than on this occasion, as if he was determined to leave a full impression of his merits on the public mind, and a model of his art for his successors.

FROM THE MORNING POST,

JUNE 24.

Mr. Kemble's performance was such as to gratify and afflict beyond any thing of the kind we ever witnessed. All the grand points in this noble character *(Coriolanus)*, he made in his very best style, and as a greater treat cannot be imagined, more sincere regret could not be felt than was proved by all present, while reflecting that such transcendent excellence would delight them no more. He was rapturously applauded throughout, and when he fell, the repeated shouts of cheering from all parts of the House were ardent and ecstatic beyond any thing of the kind perhaps ever before witnessed.

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He (Mr. Fawcett) retired amidst the plaudits of the whole House, which were frequently renewed in honour of the great Actor who had just made his final bow. All felt, that since the time of Garrick, so interesting an exit had not been made, and seemed disposed to exclaim with fond regret, in answer to his tearful "farewell"—

"Thou last of all the Romans, fare thee well!"

FROM THE TIMES,

JUNE 25.

Mr. Kemble took his leave of the Stage on Monday night, in the character of *Coriolanus.* On his first coming forward to pronounce his Farewell Address, he was received with a shout like thunder: on his retiring after it, the applause was long before it subsided entirely away. There is something in these partings with old public favourites exceedingly affecting. They teach us the shortness of human life, and the vanity of human pleasures. Our associations of admiration and delight with theatrical performers, are among our earliest recollections—among our last regrets. They are links that connect the beginning and the end of life together; *their* bright and giddy career of popularity measures the arch that spans our brief existence. It is near twenty years ago since we first saw Mr. Kemble in the same character—yet how short the interval seems! The impression appears as distinct as if it were of yesterday. In fact, intellectual objects, in proportion as they are lasting, may be said to shorten life. Time has no effect upon them. The petty and the personal, that which appeals to our senses and our interests, is by degrees forgotten, and fades away into the distant obscurity of the past. The grand and the ideal, that which appeals to the imagination, can only perish with it, and remains with us, unimpaired in its lofty abstraction, from youth to age; as, wherever we go, we still see the same heavenly bodies shining over our heads! We forget numberless things that have happened to ourselves, one generation of follies after another; but not the first time of our seeing Mr. Kemble, nor shall we easily forget the last! *Coriolanus,* the character in which he took

his leave of the Stage, was one of the first in which we remember to have seen him; and it was one in which we were not sorry to part with him, for we wished to see him appear like himself to the last. Nor was he wanting to himself on this occasion: he played the part as well as he ever did—with as much freshness and vigour. There was no abatement of spirit and energy—none of grace and dignity: his look, his action, his expression of the character, were the same as they ever were: they could not be finer. It is mere cant to say that Mr. Kemble has quite fallen off of late—that he is not what he was: he may have fallen off in the opinion of some jealous admirers, because he is no longer in exclusive possession of the Stage: but in himself he has not fallen off a jot. Why then do we approve of his retiring? Because we do not wish him to wait till it is *necessary* for him to retire. On the last evening, he displayed the same excellences, and gave the same prominence to the very same passages, that he used to do. We might refer to his manner of doing obeisance to his mother in the triumphal procession in the second act, and to the scene with *Aufidius* in the last act, as among the most striking instances. The action with which he accompanied the proud taunt to *Aufidius*—

> " Like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
> " Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli;
> " Alone I did it—"

gave double force and beauty to the image. Again, where he waits for the coming of *Aufidius* in his rival's house, he stood at the foot of the statue of Mars, himself another Mars! In the reconciliation scene with his mother, which is the finest in the play, he was not equally impressive. Perhaps this was not the fault of Mr. Kemble, but of the Stage itself, which can hardly

do justice to such thoughts and sentiments as here occur:

> " ——— My mother bows:
> " As if Olympus to a mole-hill should
> " In supplication nod."

Mr. Kemble's voice seemed to faint and stagger, to be strained and cracked, under the weight of this majestic image: but, indeed, we know of no tones deep or full enough to bear along the swelling tide of sentiment it conveys; nor can we conceive any thing in outward form to answer to it, except when Mrs. Siddons played the part of *Volumnia*. We may on this occasion be expected to say a few words on the general merits of Mr. Kemble as an Actor, and on the principal characters he performed; in doing which, we shall

> " ——— Nothing extenuate,
> " Nor set down aught in malice."

It has always appeared to us, that the range of characters in which Mr. Kemble more particularly shone, and was superior to every other Actor, were those which consisted in the developement of some one solitary sentiment or exclusive passion. From a want of rapidity, of scope, and variety, he was often deficient in expressing the bustle and complication of different interests; nor did he possess the faculty of overpowering the mind by sudden and irresistible bursts of passion: but in giving the habitual workings of a predominant feeling, as in *Penruddock*, or *The Stranger*, in *Coriolanus*, *Cato*, and some others, where all the passions move round a central point, and are governed by one master-key, he stood unrivalled. *Penruddock*, in *The Wheel of Fortune*, was one of his most correct and interesting performances, and one of the most perfect on the modern stage. The deeply-rooted, mild, pensive melancholy of the character, its embittered recollections, and

dignified benevolence, were conveyed by Mr. Kemble with equal truth, elegance, and feeling. In *The Stranger*, again, which is in fact the same character, he brooded over the recollection of disappointed hope till it became a part of himself; it sunk deeper into his mind the longer he dwelt upon it; his regrets only became more profound as they became more durable. His person was moulded to the character. The weight of sentiment which oppressed him was never suspended: the spring at his heart was never lightened—it seemed as if his whole life had been a suppressed sigh! So in *Coriolanus*, he exhibited the ruling passion with the same unshaken firmness, he preserved the same haughty dignity of demeanour, the same energy of will, and unbending sternness of temper throughout. He was swayed by a single impulse. His tenaciousness of purpose was only irritated by opposition; he turned neither to the right nor the left; the vehemence with which he moved forward increasing every instant, till it hurried him on to the catastrophe. In *Leontes*, also, in *The Winter's Tale* (a character he at one time played often), the growing jealousy of the King, and the exclusive possession which this passion gradually obtains over his mind, were marked by him in the finest manner, particularly where he exclaims—

" ——— Is whispering nothing?
" Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses?
" Kissing with inside lip? Stopping the career
" Of laughter with a sigh (a note infallible
" Of breaking honesty)? Horsing foot on foot?
" Skulking in corners? Wishing clocks more swift?
" Hours minutes? The noon midnight? and all eyes
" Blind with the pin and web, but their's; their's only,
" That would unseen be wicked? Is this nothing?
" Why then the world and that's in't is nothing,
" The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia's nothing,
" My wife is nothing, if this be nothing!"

In the course of this enumeration, every proof told stronger, and followed with quicker and harder strokes; his conviction became more rivetted at every step of his progress; and at the end, his mind, and "every corporal agent," appeared wound up to a phrenzy of despair. In such characters, Mr. Kemble had no occasion to call to his aid either the resources of invention, or the tricks of the art: his success depended on the increasing intensity with which he dwelt on a given feeling, or enforced a passion that resisted all interference or controul.

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In *Macbeth*, Mr. Kemble was unequal to "the tug and war" of the passions which assail him: he stood as it were at bay with fortune, and maintained his ground too steadily against "fate and metaphysical aid;" instead of staggering and reeling under the appalling visions of the preternatural world, and having his frame wrenched from all the holds and resting places of his will, by the stronger power of imagination. In the latter scenes, however, he displayed great energy and spirit; and there was a fine melancholy retrospective tone in his manner of delivering the lines,

"My way of life has fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,"

which smote upon the heart, and remained there ever after. His *Richard III.* wanted that tempest and whirlwind of the soul, that life and spirit, and dazzling rapidity of motion, which fills the stage, and burns in every part of it, when Mr. Kean performs this character. To Mr. Kean's acting in general, we might apply the lines of the poet, where he describes

"The fiery soul that, working out its way,
"Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
"And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay."

Mr. Kemble's manner, on the contrary, had always something dry, hard, and pedantic in it. "You shall relish him more in the scholar than the soldier:" but his monotony did not fatigue, his formality did not displease; because there was always sense and meaning in what he did. The fineness of Mr. Kemble's figure may be supposed to have led to that statue-like appearance, which his acting was sometimes too apt to assume: as the diminutiveness of Mr. Kean's person has probably compelled him to bustle about too much, and to attempt to make up for the want of dignity of form, by the violence and contrast of his attitudes. If Mr. Kemble were to remain in the same posture for half an hour, his figure would only excite admiration: if Mr. Kean were to stand still only for a moment, the contrary effect would be apparent. One of the happiest and most spirited of all Mr. Kemble's performances, and in which even his defects were blended with his excellences to produce a perfect whole, was his *Pierre*. The dissolute indifference assumed by this character, to cover the darkness of his designs, and the fierceness of his revenge, accorded admirably with Mr. Kemble's natural manner; and the tone of morbid rancorous raillery, in which *Pierre* delights to indulge, was in unison with the actor's reluctant, contemptuous personifications of gaiety, with the scornful spirit of his Comic Muse, which always laboured—*invita Minerva*—against the grain. *Cato* was another of those parts for which Mr. Kemble was peculiarly fitted by his physical advantages. There was nothing for him to do in this character, but to *appear* in it. It had all the dignity of *still-life*. It was a studied piece of classical costume—a conscious exhibition of elegantly disposed drapery, that was all: yet, as a mere display of personal and artificial grace, it was inimitable.

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In short, we think the distinguishing excellence of his acting may be summed up in one word—*intensity;* in the seizing upon some one feeling or idea, in insisting upon it, in never letting it go, and in working it up, with a certain graceful consistency, and conscious grandeur of conception, to a very high degree of pathos or sublimity. If he had not the unexpected bursts of nature and genius, he had all the regularity of art; if he did not display the tumult and conflict of opposite passions in the soul, he gave the deepest and most permanent interest to the uninterrupted progress of individual feeling; and in embodying a high idea of certain characters, which belong rather to sentiment than passion, to energy of will, than to loftiness or to originality of imagination, he was the most excellent Actor of his time. This praise of him is not exaggerated: the blame we have mixed with it is not invidious. We have only to add to both, the expression of our grateful remembrances and best wishes—Hail and farewell!

FROM BELL'S WEEKLY MESSENGER,

JUNE 29.

On Monday night last, Mr. Kemble took his leave of the public, in the character of *Coriolanus.* He sustained the part throughout with as much vigour as we have seen him exert on any former occasion. The applause which he received was enthusiastic in the extreme, and when the curtain dropped, the Pit rose up in a body, and continued waving hats and laurels for several minutes.

As Mr. Kemble has taken leave of the stage, the

Town, as far as the Drama is concerned, must take its leave of him, and each, we presume, will bid the farewell with equal regret. In many points of view, Mr. Kemble was such as we cannot hope to see again.

We fully remember when we first saw Mr. Kemble upon the London stage. At that time he appeared to us as having more art than nature; and being ourselves but young critics, and judging more from feeling than from principles, we regarded him as departing from propriety, in the same degree in which we saw him removed from this character of nature, as it existed in our own minds. We compared him with our own notions,—indeed with our own knowledge of the prototype in nature, of the parts and sentiments which he acted; we saw immediately, that the performance and the reality had very little resemblance, and that we had never seen any one act, look, and speak, as we beheld in him. When we saw him a second time, we began to understand the source of our error, and the character of his excellence. We perceived that his whole performance was an art, and that this art consisted of rules which he had closely studied, and by considerable skill had made them his own; that he had departed intentionally from simple nature, because he had seen that nature, artificially combined, would produce a greater effect; that his performance, therefore, was not to be judged by its resemblance to ordinary nature and general character, but by its conformity with what nature would appear and become, under certain selected accompaniments. We then saw, that acting, like poetry, should take its subject from select nature, and that an actor, like a poet, a painter, or a lover, would never have the genuine feelings, spirit, and genius of his art, unless he formed himself by a *beau-ideal* in his own imagination. It was then, and not till

then, that we began to do justice to Mr. Kemble, and to acknowledge that his art, like that of Zeuxis, consisted in selecting beauties wherever he found them, and then uniting them, according to nature, in a whole, of which every part was natural, but the composition artificial.

The *Coriolanus* of Mr. Kemble has frequently been before the town, and amongst all who are fitted to judge, and all who were capable of understanding and feeling, there was never but one opinion. He entered into the conception of the poet, and gave us a Roman, such as Virgil would have drawn him. It is impossible to conceive any thing of more majesty. It was an epic painting,—not of what Rome was, and still less of what *Coriolanus* was; but of that *beau ideal* of Rome and *Coriolanus*, which existed in the imagination of Virgil, of Shakspeare, and of Mr. Kemble.

This is, in fact, the true art of painting and acting, which is not the less natural because it is art; it is select and not ordinary nature; it is nature as it might be, and as it certainly sometimes, and in some persons, has been, but not as we see it every day, and in every great man. The same remarks will apply to his *Cato*. It is the *Cato* of the poets; the *Cato* whom Lucan had on one side when he put the gods on the other; the *Cato* who took up the vanquished side, whilst the gods adopted the fortunate party. There was nothing of nature in this, and by nature, therefore, it is not to be judged.

In *Cardinal Wolsey*, Mr. Kemble approached to us as a natural character, and accordingly he was always seen in this part with feeling and sympathy. In *Lear*, as far as the character admitted it, he was equally touching and equally natural; and in *Macbeth*, he was great, without ceasing to be natural. In *Hamlet*, by a calm and philosophical declamation in the highest point of

elegance and refinement, he atoned for the want of fire and the force of constitutional temperament. In all these characters we have no hope of seeing his place again properly filled. He knew so well what was the nature of any feeling, and of any passion, that no one (as far as his physical powers allowed) could give it so readily and so faithfully; and the same knowledge and the same study allowed him to take liberties, which would be dangerous in another. Having this groundwork, he seldom fell into the mere trick of the stage, and even in all his varieties in the same passion, he never passed beyond the natural key.

We have only to repeat our wishes for his health and welfare, and our hopes that his retirement will be employed in that suitable purpose for which we could alone have recommended it.

FROM THE NEWS,

JUNE 29.

On Monday night we finally parted with the Master of the Tragic Scene—the most graceful, majestic, and classical pillar, which, for the last 20 years, has supported the Fane of the Tragic Muse—Mr. Kemble bade adieu to the stage and the public. Even if our limits would allow of expatiation, we could write on this subject, only to discover the inadequacy of our vocabulary, to do justice to the great man we have lost, to our feelings of personal gratitude and regret, or to our full sense of the loss which the Drama has sustained, by this secession of its main ornament, and support. A few words we cannot withhold. It is needless to say, that the House over-

flowed in all corners, or that one sentiment, and one mode of fervent expression burst from every part of it.

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It is far from our intention to recapitulate, what we have so often formerly written on the various excellences of Mr. Kemble, as they have been displayed in his wide range of distinguished characters. The task, a tempting one, 'tis true, is the less necessary, from the admirable, and, with some modifications, the just manner in which it has been executed by a critic, in a contemporary journal*. It is sufficient to remark, by way of characterizing shortly the distinctive superiority of Mr. Kemble as a tragedian, that he was gifted with a figure, and a countenance of the rarest dignity, the most striking nobleness, and the most imposing grace, which seemed to survive, as it were to us moderns, to refresh our conceptions of the forms of antique mould; that the intellect of no common order which informed this noble tenement in the course of an inquisitive and tasteful range of study, had been concentrated by Mr. Kemble, unremittingly towards the pursuits of his profession; that this put him in possession, in an extraordinary degree, of all that might remotely or immediately illustrate his representations on the Stage: classical attainment, chastened taste, diffused information, all that contributes to mental accomplishment. His style of acting was replete with the evidence of these advantages. It was nervous, severe, pure, classical, racy, and refined. It bespoke patient study and laborious research, as well as natural intellect, and the felicity of genius. Though its masterly vigour struck all minds, its scholastic polish and rigid taste,

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* The Times.

made it peculiarly attractive to those of cultivation and refinement, and if a fantastic and licentious manner of modern rise, has been thought by many to approach nearer to the freedom of nature, we are convinced, that its greatest success has not been amongst the last described persons. In characters of Roman dignity and martial pomp, the grandeur of Mr. Kemble's form, concurred with the grace of his movements, and the dignity of his declamation, to produce the most perfect and splendid effect. In these parts he was evidently most popular, though we think there were others, in which his merits were equally great. In displaying the dignity of suffering greatness, the torture of intense and agonized emotion, the settled grief of afflicting reminiscences, the pomp of ambition, the grandeur of stoical virtue, the relentings of nature, breaking through the severity of pride or anger, Mr. Kemble by turns astonished, overwhelmed, penetrated, and melted the bosoms of his audience. There was a precision and sure effect in the touches of his style, which were the result at once of skill and of study. His manner has been often called classical, probably from his having often acted classical characters, and from loose associations, connected with his figure and appearance. But the epithet has a deeper and more appropriate application. His style was *essentially* classical, distinguished by the unity of design, the severe grandeur, and the majestic simplicity which characterized the fine arts in the classic ages. It had nothing in it of the modern school, nothing of the romantic or the sentimental, no minor beauties, no second-rate decorations; it was massive, grand, severe and lofty, a whole, of majestic beauty and classic grace. The loss which the Stage has sustained, will be manifest to every one who looks to Mr. Kemble, or to those he has left behind him; and we are almost inclined to think, that

we shall not be disparaging the past, and hardly auguring too despondingly of the future, if we conclude with the poet's words—

Nil criturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.

In addition to these concurring testimonies in favour of Mr. Kemble's last performance, by otherwise opposing Critics, the following offering from the Muses, who could scarcely be silent on a subject so closely connected with one of the Sisterhood, appeared in the daily journals.

"TRIBUTE TO A DEPARTED ACTOR,"

FROM THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

BY JAMES SMITH, ESQ.*

Ye Critics, who, prone to illumine the nation,
Made mirth of his pauses, and cold declamation,
His regular cadence delighted to probe,
And scoff at the finical fold of his robe;
Since now all abroad are his classical plays,
On the margin of Avon, mere waifs and estrays,
Come, cast them anew in your wisdom, and tell
The man on our Stage who can act them so well.
Ye rival Tragedians, who flutter your night,
Hurl'd up by the crowd for a holiday sight,
The squibs of a season—how fleetly ye pass,
Like the fugitive forms o'er a magical glass!

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* One of the Authors of the Rejected Addresses.

But Kemble alone could this privilege boast,
Who saw him the oftenest, lik'd him the most.
From boyhood to manhood, fast bound in thy spell,
With sorrow I part from thee—Kemble, farewell!
What tho' thy deportment acquaintance bespeaks,
With those out of vogue vagrants, the Romans and Greeks;
Denotes some dislike to the now reigning school,
And seems just to hint, that the Town is a fool:
What tho' thy *Macbeth*, in familiar pet,
Ne'er cried to the Witches, "Hail fellow, well met!"
Was shrewdly suspected of study and grace,
And tried, and found guilty of figure and face:
Those *faults* I attribute to Nature, and shun
To visit the sins of the sire on the son.
Old Shakspeare in heaven, to fame still alive,
Rejoic'd to behold thee his dramas revive,
When dead, shall receive thee aloft in the sky,
And thus, if I prophecy rightly, shall cry:
" Oh welcome, thrice welcome! by Providence plac'd
" In regions of liberty, science, and taste;
" Here dwell [illegible]id the chosen of Genius above,
" And share with my Garrick, my heart and my love.
" And yet, how my pleasure is shadow'd with woe,
" When I think on the fate of my offspring below!
" My darling *Othello*, my blood-tainted Thane,
" My *Richard*, my *Lear*, my poor lunatic Dane,
" To the slow-winding Avon shall nightly repair,
" And hang on its willows their harps in despair.
" Depriv'd, in thy death, of a guardian and friend,
" With spirit to decorate, taste to amend,
" Oh when, upon earth, shall my tragedies see,
" Protectors and Actors—like Garrick and thee?"

ODE

ON THE

RETIREMENT OF JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE, ESQ.

FROM THE STAGE.

BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.*

THE Tragic Muse had sunk in grief,
That seem'd almost to spurn relief,
When Siddons left the stage;
Yet was she sooth'd, as Kemble still
Remain'd, her Shakspeare's scenes to fill
With dignity or rage.

His *Brutus* she beheld with awe,
And stern *Coriolanus* saw
With all his lofty mien;
Time seem'd in backward course to glide,
And Rome to rise in ancient pride,
To grace Britannia's scene:

The piteous woe of frantic *Lear*,
The direness, yet compunctious fear,
That marks the ambitious *Thane*,
Malignant *Richard*'s savage ire,
John's baleful gloom, and *Percy*'s fire—
But chief the *Princely Dane*.

Nor less his zeal, acute and sage,
To clear the text of cank'ring age,
And brighten ev'ry line—
A praise which few with him can share—
That Avon's Bard, the Nation's care,
In purest light may shine.

* Proprietor of the Sun Newspaper.

The Muse, his worth thus pond'ring o'er,
His form majestic, classic lore,
Then utter'd with a sigh:
" Alas! my lofty scenes, I fear,
" Which now in living truth appear,
" Will soon with Kemble die!

" Too soon the scenic sphere he leaves,
" Too soon the public he bereaves
" Of Shakspeare's breathing page;
" Too soon, like Siddons, he retires,
" While glowing with his wonted fires,
" And unsubdu'd by age.

" Too soon he quits an art, design'd
" To charm and moralize mankind,
" Where Pleasure leads to Right;
" An art which, could that Bard inspire,
" From whom all other Bards retire,
" Lost in his glorious light.

" Hail to that art, in early time
" By me inspir'd, august, sublime,
" Religion's aid below,
" That man reflects through all his course,
" Makes conscious Guilt feel keen remorse,
" And conscious Virtue glow.

" And hail to him, whose ardent aim
" To give that art its noblest fame,
" In splendour rais'd it high;
" So high, had Fortune been inclin'd
" To aid his bold and pregnant mind,
" With Athens it might vie.

" But with consoling joy I find,
" Taste, judgment, friendship, have combin'd
" To dedicate a day,
" With emulative zeal to meet,
" Genius to grace on his retreat,
" And well-earn'd honours pay."

Thus spoke the Muse, and while we share
Her fond regret, be now our care
A just and grateful deed—
Let then at once this social band
Rise, with the votive glass in hand,
To "Kemble's health" decreed.

Distant, long distant, be the day
That calls him from life's stage away,
Where, well-perform'd his part,
Where, far aloof from vulgar strife,
He shone the grace of private life,
The model for his art.

But when her awful curtain, Fate
Shall drop upon his mortal state,
May he depart serene—
Depart as much devoid of pain
As those whom he so oft had slain
Upon the mimic scene.

And let the last recording stave,
Inscrib'd upon his honour'd grave,
Declare, with no parade,
" Here lies the Man who, when his art
" Assum'd a wise and noble part,
" It then HIMSELF display'd."

We have now to record the origin and progress of one of the most sincere and gratifying compliments, that perhaps was ever passed upon any individual, whose services and merits are confined to so narrow a sphere of action as the profession of the Stage presents. On the first public announcement of Mr. Kemble's intention to retire at the close of the late season, the idea, no doubt, generally prevailed among persons of theatrical taste, that some public tribute of honour was due to him, who had for so many years contributed both personally, and by his classical researches, to heighten, improve, and dignify the Art itself, and the character of the Profession; but there is a wide difference between feeling an impulse, and executing the action prompted by it. The merits of the latter, in this instance, is due to a small Society of Literary and Dramatic Friends, who had associated themselves into a Club, which, though not boasting of that combination of talent that rendered the days of Johnson and Goldsmith equally memorable as the æra of wit and more solid philosophy, can still arrogate to itself a similar quality in its constitution, to the "Literary Club" of that period, whose object it was to soften by fellowship and good humour, those severer dispositions, which the duties and struggles of life too frequently engender. At one of these meetings above alluded to, the suggestion

was no sooner made, of some public tribute of respect and regard being due to Mr. Kemble, on the contemplated event of his retirement from the Stage, than the propriety, and even necessity of it, was immediately felt; and the idea was followed up by a Resolution, that the Members of the Club, consisting of the following Gentlemen, should form themselves into a temporary Committee, for the purpose of considering the best mode of effecting this desirable object.

R. Stephenson, Esq.	W. H. W. Betty, Esq.
A. Rae, Esq.	J. St. Aubyn, Esq.
J. Poole, Esq.	I. A. Urquhart, Esq.
Wm. Walker, Esq.	Thomas Cooke, Esq.
Wm. Simpson, Esq.	C. Kemble, Esq.
C. Mathews, Esq.	H. R. Willett, Esq.

Honourable George Lambe.

The next step was to call a more general meeting of the friends and admirers of Mr. Kemble, which was done by the following Letter, dispersed pretty generally amongst people of theatrical taste and inclination.

"The Admirers of the Drama, who may duly appreciate the benefit it has derived from the unwearied aim at its improvement, which Mr. Kemble has manifested during a long period of classical research; and the lovers of the theatric art, who call to recollection the repeated gratification they have experienced throughout his career of professional excellence, are invited to unite themselves in paying some tribute of respect to him on his

retirement from the Stage. It is intended to invite Mr. Kemble to a Dinner to be given on the occasion, at which to present him with a piece of Plate, already under the hand of the first Artist in design.

"The Tickets, including the Dinner and Present, will be issued at Two Guineas; and Gentlemen wishing to subscribe, are requested to transmit their names to the Committee, at the Piazza Coffee House."

This Letter produced the desired effect, and there was a full attendance of the above description of persons, when the following Gentlemen were added to the original Committee; and it was resolved, that Meetings should be held every Tuesday and Friday, at the Piazza Coffee House, for arranging and conducting the celebration of the intended honours.

Wm. Abbott, Esq.
G. Bartley, Esq.
Wm. Dowton, Esq.
C. Farley, Esq.
J. Fawcett, Esq.
R. Jones, Esq.
Edmund Kean, Esq.
J. Liston, Esq.
Wm. Shield, Esq.
C. Taylor, Esq.
D. Terry, Esq.
T. Welch, Esq.
C. Young, Esq.

Mr. Walker and Mr. Urquhart were selected as Joint Secretaries.

A detail of each day's proceedings is not deemed sufficiently interesting to be worthy of insertion; but as the great object of the Committee was to concentrate the rank, talent, and taste of the Metropolis, in completing the List

of Subscribers, and not to solicit the junction of the public in general by advertisement or otherwise, it will not be thought extraordinary that such frequent meetings were considered necessary, and that even then, it required considerable attention and arrangement, in receiving applications, and selecting, without giving offence, those names which might be thought most capable of adding importance to the object of the Meeting.

Lord Holland having been solicited to take the Chair, and having expressed himself extremely happy in being applied to, the following Letter of Invitation was prepared by Mr. Urquhart, one of the Secretaries, and transmitted to Mr. Kemble, to which he replied, in the words of the answer subjoined.

Piazza Coffee House, May 24, 1817.

To John Philip Kemble, Esq.

SIR,

We, the humble Votaries of an Art of which you have so long been the ornament, and the enthusiastic admirers of the Drama, which is in every way so much indebted to you for its perfection, duly estimating the loss we shall each sustain by your retirement from the Stage, yet glowing with heart-felt delight at the recollection of the benefit and entertaintment we have respectively derived during your long professional career, are earnestly desirous of shewing you some mark of our respect and regard on this lamented, yet memorable occasion. We are aware of

the impossibility of effecting our object to the extent of our wishes; but in proportion to the inadequacy of the offering, will be the favour conferred on us by your readiness to accept it. Permit us, therefore, to request the honour of your company at Dinner, on a day which we beg of you to name, as most agreeable to yourself, immediately subsequent to the termination of those labours, which will have identified your Name with the Genius of the Stage, and have left an impression on the public mind, not to be effaced by time or circumstance.

By Order of the Committee of Admirers and Friends,

WALKER & URQUHART.

No. 89, *Great Russell-Street, Bloomsbury-Square,*
1st June, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

You purpose me an honour, of which, without the slightest affectation, I think myself unworthy, and am unable to express my very deep sense.

On Friday, the 27th instant, if that day is perfectly convenient, I will have the honour of waiting on the Meeting, where, and at what hour they please to appoint.

I am, Gentlemen,
With the utmost respect,
Your most obliged and most obedient Servant,
(Signed) J. P. KEMBLE.

To the Committee.

As the day of celebration approached, each Member of the Committee increased in his desire to be personally useful in furthering the

Gentlemen,

You propose me an honour, of which, without the slightest affectation, I think myself unworthy, and am unable to express my very deep sense.

On Friday, the 27th instant, if that day is perfectly convenient, I will ~~[illegible]~~ have the honour of waiting on the Meeting, where, and at what hour, they please to appoint.

I am, Gentlemen, with the utmost respect,
Your most obliged
and most obedient Servant
J. S. Bemlle.

June 1st 1817.
To
8 Great Russell Street.
Bloomsbury Square.

The Senate of the Humbles Hand Writing

object of the meetings; and Sub-Committees were appointed, for the purpose of procuring a Design for the Piece of Plate; for obtaining an Ode from some eminent Poet on the occasion; for the sketching and executing a Design for the Ticket Plate; for the general arrangement of the Dinner, and other incidental circumstances.

The Design for the Vase was most obligingly furnished by Mr. Flaxman, whose truly classical and correct taste, as displayed in this specimen of his art, has since received the unequivocal admiration of the best judges.

At the particular suggestion of Mr. Mathews, a Medal, from a Portrait in wax in his collection, bearing a striking resemblance of Mr. Kemble, was struck, to commemorate the day. It was executed by Mr. Warwick, under the superintendance of Mr. Simpson, and worn at the Dinner by each Member of the Committee.

Mr. Campbell, author of the Pleasures of Hope, volunteered an effort of his Muse, which will be given in order, when we come to speak of its recitation on the day of the Dinner; and Mr. T. Cooke was applied to for the composition of the Musical Accompaniment, which he most ably executed.

Mr. Poole, the well-known Dramatic Author, supplied the following Inscription for the Vase, which not only received the unanimous approbation of those on whose behalf he undertook the pleasing task, but called forth from the Noble President, Lord Holland, the most flattering expressions of praise and admiration.

TO

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE,

On his Retirement from the Stage,

Of which, for thirty-four years, he has been
The Ornament and Pride;
Which to his Learning, Taste, and Genius,
Is indebted for its present state of Refinement;
Which, under his Auspices,
And aided by his unrivalled Labours,
(Most worthily devoted to the support of the
LEGITIMATE DRAMA,
And more particularly to the
GLORY OF SHAKSPEARE),
Has attained to a degree of Splendour and Propriety
Before unknown;
And which, from his high Character, has acquired
Increase of
HONOUR AND DIGNITY:

THIS VASE,

BY A NUMEROUS ASSEMBLY OF HIS ADMIRERS,
In testimony of their
GRATITUDE, RESPECT, AND AFFECTION,
Was presented,
Through the Hands of their President,
HENRY RICHARD VASSAL, LORD HOLLAND,
XXVII JUNE, MDCCCXVII.

"MORE IS THY DUE THAN MORE THAN ALL CAN PAY."

RETIRED FROM THE STAGE 23RD JUNE 1817.

Medal Worn by the Committee at the Dinner.

Published by John Miller, Bow Street, Covent Garden August 1817

The Performers of Drury-Lane Theatre had intended, on the evening of Mr. Kemble's taking leave, to offer him their tribute of regard, at a personal interview, immediately upon his quitting the Stage; but owing to the indisposition of Mr. Rae, they were obliged to defer the gratifying duty till the morning of Friday the 27th of June, the day of the Dinner, when Messrs. Rae, Dowton, Johnstone, and Holland, as a Deputation from that Theatre, waited upon him at his house, and Mr. Rae addressed him in the following words:

MR. KEMBLE,

Sir, Mr. Dowton, Mr. Johnstone, Mr. Holland, and myself, as a Deputation from all the Performers of Drury-Lane Theatre, have the honour to wait on you, to offer our tribute of personal respect, and at the same time deeply to lament your having withdrawn yourself from the Stage, of which for several years you have been the pride and distinguished ornament. I am concerned that illness prevented my accompanying these Gentlemen, for this purpose, on the evening of your universally regretted retirement; but we trust, though late in the expression of our feelings, it will not now be the less acceptable. As the Representatives of Drury-Lane Theatre, we proudly feel, that there you attained and

perfected that high professional character which is now deservedly drawing forth every mark of public estimation: and we beg to assure you, that we fully participate in those general feelings of admiration and respect. We hold in just estimation, the dignity you have added to the Profession, both by your genius in the art itself, and by the force of your example in private life. We take our leave, wishing you the enjoyment of your health; and with an earnest hope that the remainder of your life may in every respect be as conducive of happiness to yourself, as it has hitherto been serviceable and ornamental to Learning and the Stage.

Mr. Kemble was evidently very much affected by this Address, and thanked the Deputation most cordially for the honour conferred on him.

Farewell Dinner

to

J. P. Kemble Esq.

on his retirement from the Stage.

ADMIT

Secretaries.

NOT TRANSFERABLE.

THE OBSERVED OF ALL OBSERVERS

On the morning of the 27th of June, the Committee met, and having arranged the business of the day, again assembled at the Freemasons' Tavern an hour before Dinner, to receive Mr. Kemble. The following is a List of the Noblemen and Gentlemen who received Tickets for the occasion.

Earl of Aberdeen.
Baron de Arabet.
Abbott, Mr. Wm.
Arnold, S. J.
Anderdon, —
Adolphus, J.
Anderton, —
Adolphus, J. Leycester.
Adams, Wm.
Alderson, T. J.
Achroyd, Wm.
Angerstein, J. J.
Angerstein, T.
Allen, John.
Andrews, J.
Anderson, Samuel.

Duke of Bedford.
Earl of Blessington.
Sir G. Beaumont.
Col. Berkeley.
Rev. Dr. Burney.
Dr. C. Burney.
Betty, Mr. W. H. W.

Bartley, G.
Bannister, J.
Boswell, J.
Blanchard, Wm.
Broadhurst, —
Bellamy, —
Baily, A.
Bushnan, J.
Brandram, T.
Briggs, —
Barber, S.
Burgon, T.
Burgon, J. H.
Barnett, —
Broadwood, T.
Broadwood, H.
Brown, J.
Berens, R.
Bramah, J.
Bridge, J.
Brandon, James.

Earl of Carlisle.
Lord Cahir.

Rt. Hon. George Canning.
Sir N. Conant.
Croker, Mr. J. W.
Calcraft, John, Esq. M.P.
Cooke, T.
Campbell, Thomas.
Chantry, (R. A.)
Cobb, J.
Crohat, Henry.
Carruthers, David.
Curtis, J. sen.
Claremont, —
Curling, —
Corry, J.
Chatterton, J.
Cribb, Wm.
Crabbe, Rev. G.
Conway, W. A.

Dowton, Mr. Wm.
Duruset, John.
Dubois, E.
Durtnall, —
D'Egville, J.
Dawkins, John.
De Charmes, —
Dawson, —
Darke, S. W.
Dibdin, T.
Donaldson, —
Dauncey, —
Daniel, —

Earl of Essex.
Earl of Egremont.
Lord Erskine.
Egerton, Mr. —
Emery, John.
Ellis, R.
Elly, C.
Este, M. L.
Emery, —
Este, —

Earl of Fife.
Right Hon. J. H. Frere.
Farley, Mr. C.
Fawcett, John.
Foss, —
Farrell, T.
Frearson, —
Field, John.
Francies, —
Ferguson, C.
Foss, E.
Foss, Henry.
Fraser, —
Flaxman, —
Foster, —
Fisher, —
Ford, G. S.

Lord Wm. Gordon.
Gifford, Mr. Wm.
Goutier, M.
Griffiths, G.

Goldsmith, Mr. E.
Garcias, J.
Grant, —
Griffiths, T.
Green, Wm.
Gregg, Francis.
Glynn, T.
Grimaldi, Joseph.
Gregg, Francis, jun.
Goding, —
Gates, Wm.
Gordon, Capt. (R. N.)

Earl of Harrington.
Lord Holland.
Sir G. Heathcote, Bart.
Heath, Mr.
Hamilton, —
Herbert, G.
Heber, Richard.
Harris, Henry.
Hitchins, J.
Hill, —
Heath, G. C.
Holt, F. L.
Henchman, F.
Henderson, —
Henderson, John.
Henderson, R.
Henderson, Wm.
Hibbert, George.
Hicks, John.
Hall, Walter.

Haydon, Mr. B. R.
Hoffman, J.
Hudson, J. S.
Heath, C.
Holland, C.
Holt, R.
Hennington, Barnard.
Houghton, S.
Hammett, F.
Hammett, J.
Harpur, —
Hay, J.
Hurd, P.
Harrington, S.
Herring, C.
Hammet, Thomas.

Innes, Mr. J.
Ilberry, J.
Incledon, Charles.
Isaacs, B.

Jones, Mr. Richard.
Jobling, R.
Johnstone, John.
Johnson, Henry.
Jameson, Wm.
Jolly, T.
Jameson, A.

Lord Kirkwall.
Kemble, Mr. Charles.
Kean, Edmund.

Kew, Mr. Wm.
Kelly, Michael.
Knyvett, —
Kemp, —
Knight, T.

Marquis of Lansdowne.
Lord Lauderdale.
Sir Thomas Lawrence.
Hon. George Lambe.
Leigh, Mr. J. H. M. P.
Liston, John.
Lysons, Sam.
Loughnan, Andrew.
Lavie, Germain.
Leigh, S.
Litchfield, —
Linley, Wm.
Lysons, Rev. D.
Leverton, Thos.
Lindo, T.
Lyall, —
Leach, John.
Locke, Wm.
Littledale, —
Lumley, Wm.
Lander, J.
Leigh, Chandos.
Lumley, Geo.
Lane, Thos.

Earl of Mulgrave.
Lord Mountnorris.

Hon. D. Macdonald.
Mathews, Mr. Charles.
Mitchell, W.
Moore, T.
Murray, John.
Macready, Wm.
Merriman, J.
Merriman, Dr.
Mawman, J.
Munn, —
Mocatta, D.
Miller, John.
Moore, Thomas.
Manlay, —
Mocatta, M.
Morris, John.
Millingland, —
Milns, C. N.
Milligan, —
Murray, Alex.
Moser, —
Merriman, T.
Meyer, —
Murray, Wm.

Nicholl, Mr. George.
Northover, T.

Earl of Ossory.
Sir Wm. Owen.
Colonel O'Kelly.
Oakley, Mr. B.
Owen, Wm. (R. A.)
Oddie, H.

Earl Percy.
Lord Petersham.
General Phipps.
Poole, Mr. John.
Pope, Alex.
Pearse, Captain.
Perry, James.
Price, Ralph.
Parry, Wm.
Puller, Richard.
Phillips, Wm.
Phipps, A.
Power, Richard.
Payne, John Howard.
Pottywood, —
Pocock, Isaac.

Quin, Mr.

Rae, Mr. Alex.
Rogers, Samuel.
Robins, George.
Reid, J. R.
Rose, George.
Rhodes, Wm. B.
Rivers, Josiah.
Richardson, Wm.
Reynolds, H. R.
Richardson, C.
Raymond, James Grant.
Rundell, J. B.
Richardson, J.

Earl of Stair.

Stephenson, Mr. Rowland.
Simpson, Wm.
St. Aubyn, James.
Shield, Wm.
Shee, M. A. (R. A.)
Smith, James.
Smith, Newman.
Saville, James.
Skelton, Jonathan.
Skelton, H.
Scudamore, John.
Smirke, R. (R. A.)
Secritan, Frederick.
Stuart, Dan.
Simmons, Sam.
Street, T.
Sims, —
Spottiswood, Andrew.
Sinclair, John.
Sutton, —
Shewill, E. W.
Saville, Joseph.
Scalet, —
Soane, J. (R. A.)
Steer, Samuel.

Marquis of Tavistock.
Lord Torrington.
Right Hon. Geo. Tierney, M. P.
Taylor, Mr. Charles.
Thomson, H. (R. A.)
Taylor, John.

Telford, Mr. C.
Twiss, Horace.
Telford, H.
Talma, —
Tarbult, —
Turner, —
Taylor, —
Turner, J. W. M. (R. A.)
Thornhill, Fred.
Turner, —
Terry, Daniel.
Twining, Rich.
Tait, Dr.

Urquhart, I. A. Sec.

Vaux, George.
Vickery, Rev. J.

Marquis of Worcester.
Sir Robert Wilson.
Walker, Wm. Sec.

Willett, Mr. H. R.
Welsh, Thomas.
Westmacott, R. (R. A.)
Woodbridge, F.
West, Benj. (R. A).
Warren, Edw.
West, Raph.
Wilson, Thos.
Williams, W.
Welsh, James.
Wallack, James.
Wallace, J.
Wrench, B.
Ward, C. W.
Walpole, Robt.
Wood, Thos.
Whitter, —

Earl of Yarmouth.
Young, Mr. G. H.
Young, Charles.
Young, W.

At seven o'clock, dinner was announced. Mr. Kemble, and the Noble President, were preceded from the Drawing-room to the Grand Banqueting Saloon by the Committee, the Band playing the march from an Occasional Overture. Mr. Kemble took his seat on the right of Lord Holland, and His Grace the Duke of Bedford

on the left. During dinner, the Band played selections from Handel. After the cloth was removed, *Non Nobis Domine* was sung by Messrs. Leete, Nield, Terrail, Pyne, Broadhurst, Clark, Bellamy, C. Taylor, Incledon, Shield, Hawes, and Master Turle. The Noble Chairman then gave

THE KING.

"God save the King," and full Chorus, the Band joining.

THE REGENT.

Glee—"Hail, Star of Brunswick."

THE QUEEN AND ROYAL FAMILY.

Glee—"When Order in this Land commenc'd."

At this period, Mr. Rae and Mr. Mathews presented to Lord Holland the cast and drawing of the Vase.

His Lordship then rose and said—"Gentlemen, in pursuance of the proceedings of this day, I hoped to have had the honour and satisfaction of presenting to my Friend, who sits near me, the Piece of Plate which it is your wish to bestow upon him, as an indication of the high sense you entertain of his abilities. But, unfortunately, I am prevented from performing that grateful duty, the rich and beautiful work designed for the Vase, not being yet completed. Here is, however, a drawing of the Vase, which will be handed round the room. I have also a copy of the Inscription intended

for it, which, if you please, I will read to you."—His Lordship then read the Inscription*.

Lord Holland continued—" If, Gentlemen, it were not for the feelings which actuate you, and which influence myself, here I might close, because I think, composed as this Company is, of so many Gentlemen who have pursued the arduous Profession of the Stage with great success, and who are perfectly qualified to judge of scenic ability, it would be superfluous in me to descant on such a topic: it would, indeed, unable as I am to do justice to the subject, be worse than superfluous; it would be presumptuous and impertinent in me, to enlarge on that great combination of qualities, natural and acquired, necessary to form a perfect Actor. But if, following the object for which we are here assembled, I were to touch on the various abilities of my excellent Friend near me, what else should I be doing, but describing those natural qualities and acquired perfections which are indispensable in the constitution of an accomplished Actor; which can alone raise men to that high eminence which Mr. Kemble so long enjoyed in that profession; which gives to poetry so much force and effect; and which imparts to thousands so large a portion of rational and innocent amusement? For as no person ever brought to the Stage a greater portion of those natural advantages which realize the idea of the Poet, and afford assistance to the sister arts of Painting and of Sculpture, than Mr. Kemble; so, I will contend, that no man ever cultivated the Dramatic Art with greater assiduity, zeal, learning, and judgment. Gentlemen, it is quite unnecessary for me to dwell, as I have already

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* See page 44.

said, on those qualities which recommend an Actor to public applause; because, by your being here this day, you prove that you understand them much better than I can describe them. We have met here, not only because we feel a perfect conviction of the great difficulties which are attached to the study of this Profession; but we have met here also, because we rate highly those qualifications which are necessary to success on the Stage, and which my Friend near me possesses in a pre-eminent degree. Here, Gentlemen, I wish to mention a subject, which is so immediately connected with the object for which we are met, that I trust I may be allowed to interrupt your conviviality, by calling your attention for one moment to it. It has generally been the idea of those who wrote on the profession of Acting—particularly the Poets; and of one more especially, whose name we all venerate, and whose loss we all deplore—I mean the late lamented Mr. Sheridan, speaking of the difficulties and discouraging circumstances which attend the art—'that the materials of the Actor's fame are more perishable than those of the Poet's or the Painter's.' We have met, I think, this day, to remove some of the injustice to which the Profession has been subjected. Mr. Kemble has, by collateral measures, done more for the permanent prosperity of the Stage, and consequently for the fame of its votaries, than any person who has gone before him. For, as long as the British Theatre exists—as long as the plays of Shakspeare shall be represented in this metropolis, the result of his learning and industry will be seen in the propriety of the scenic decorations, in the improvement of the *costume*, and in many matters apparently of minor consideration; but which, when effected, shew the man of research and of ability, and display the mind of the scholar and the critic.

I thought it necessary to touch upon this point, since it appears to be so nearly connected with the business of the day. I shall not trespass on you further. What we are met to do, I hope will be acceptable to my Friend, and gratifying to us all. The feelings by which we are impelled, are, I think, embodied in the Inscription which has been read to you: they are those of gratitude, respect, and affection;—gratitude, for the delight he has so often imparted to us in crowded theatres—respect for him, as a scholar and a critic—and affection for his virtues, as a man of independent character and of upright conduct. I am sure, with his usual good nature, that he will accept of this address, as a memorial of respect and esteem. If I am not misinformed, a Gentleman present will recite an Ode, more expressive of my feelings than any thing I can say to you."

His Lordship's speech was frequently interrupted by the tumultuous applause of the company. Silence being at length obtained, Mr. Young rose, and delivered the following Ode with unequalled energy and pathos.

ODE,

BY THOMAS CAMPBELL, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF THE PLEASURES OF HOPE.

PRIDE of the British Stage,
  A long, and last adieu!
Whose image brought th' heroic age
  Reviv'd to Fancy's view.
Like fields refresh'd with dewy light,
  When the sun smiles his last,
Thy parting presence makes more bright
  Our memory of the past.

And memory conjures feelings up,
  That wine or music need not swell,
As high we lift the festive cup,
  To, Kemble, fare thee well!

His was the spell o'er hearts,
  That only Acting lends,
The youngest of the sister arts,
  Where all their beauty blends.
For Poetry can ill express,
  Full many a tone of thought sublime;
And Painting, mute and motionless,
  Steals but one partial glance from time.
But, by the mighty Actor brought,
  Illusion's wedded triumphs come,
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
  And Sculpture to be dumb!

Time may again revive,
  But ne'er efface the charm,
When Cato spoke in him alive,
  Or Hotspur kindled warm.
What soul was not resign'd entire,
  To the deep sorrows of the Moor?
What English heart was not on fire,
  With him at Agincourt?
And yet a majesty possess'd
  His transports' most impetuous tone;
And to each passion of his breast,
  The Graces gave their zone.

High were the task, too high,
  Ye conscious bosoms here,
In words to paint your memory,
  Of Kemble, and of Lear;

But who forgets that white discrowned head!
  Those bursts of reason's half extinguish'd glare;
Those tears upon Cordelia's bosom shed;
  In doubt more touching than despair,
If 'twas reality he felt——
  Had Shakspeare's self amidst you been,
Friends, he had seen you melt,
  And triumph'd to have seen.

And there was many an hour,
  Of blended kindred fame;
When Siddons's auxiliar power,
  And sister magic came.
Together at the Muse's side,
  Her tragic paragons had grown;
They were the children of her pride,
  The columns of her throne.
And undivided favour ran,
  From heart to heart, in their applause,
Save for the gallantry of man,
  In lovelier woman's cause.

Fair as some classic dome,
  Robust and richly grac'd,
Your Kemble's spirit was the home,
  Of Genius and of Taste.
Taste, like the silent gnomon's power,
  That when supernal light is giv'n,
Can dial inspiration's hour,
  And tell its height in Heav'n.
At once ennobled and correct,
  His mind survey'd the tragic page;
And what the Actor could effect,
  The Scholar could presage.

These were his traits of worth—
  And must we lose them now?
And must the scene no more shew forth
  His sternly-pleasing brow?
Alas! the moral brings a tear—
  'Tis all a transient hour below,
And we that would detain thee here,
  Ourselves as fleetly go.
Yet shall our latest age
  This parting scene review—
Pride of the British Stage,
  A long, and last adieu!

The twelve last lines of the Ode, arranged by Mr. T. Cooke, were very effectively sung by the Vocal Gentlemen previously mentioned.

Lord Holland then gave the Health of Mr. Kemble, which was drank with enthusiasm.

After a short pause, during which he appeared much affected, Mr. Kemble rose, and addressed the Company as follows:

"Gentlemen, for your presence here to-day, and the honour you have done me in drinking my health, I beg leave to offer you my most sincerely grateful acknowledgments. Unused as I am to extemporaneous public speaking, it will not appear extraordinary that I should find myself embarrassed, in addressing an assembly composed of men admired for their genius, honoured for their rank, and valued for learning and talents of every kind. I shall therefore, Gentlemen, confine myself to saying, that you do me the greatest honour that can grace the retirement of any Actor; and, as it is a distinction, that never has been shown to any of my predecessors, it makes me feel the more intimately, how far your favour exceeds every thing which my deserts could pre-

tend to. Gentlemen, the terms in which you are pleased to speak of my private life, as well as of my professional exertions, are very dear to me; but on this subject, it would be immodesty to say more, than that I am proud to be thought deserving of the public good opinion. Your Noble Chairman, Gentlemen, has done me the honour of attributing to me much more merit than belongs to me; his friendly feelings have led him, I fear, very much to over-rate my services to the Stage. But I can truly say, that, when he attributed to me a strong desire to discharge my duty fairly in the different parts of my profession,—as far as my earnest endeavours to deserve that praise, could be considered as entitling me to it,—so far your Noble Chairman has spoken of me only with justice. The manner in which you have been so kindly good as to show your solicitude, that my performances may be handed down to—posterity is too proud a word—but,—that the memory of them, should live after me—is too flattering to my feelings, not to affect my heart most deeply.—I receive the gift, Gentlemen, with affection—with gratitude; and it is pleasing to me to know, that I shall still be remembered, even when that mark of your kindness shall have faded away; since my Farewell has been celebrated by the Muse that dictated the *Pleasures of Hope*.—I beg leave, Gentlemen, to propose the health of our Noble Chairman,

LORD HOLLAND.

His Lordship, in returning thanks, declared that it was most gratifying to his feelings to preside in such an Assembly on such an occasion.

The next Toast given, was,

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, and PRINCE of SAXE-COBURG.

Song by Mr. Broadhurst—" Believe me, with all those endearing young charms."

DUKE OF YORK and the Army.

Band playing.

DUKE OF CLARENCE and the NAVY.

Rule Britannia—full Chorus.

THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF SHAKSPEARE.

THE LIVING DRAMATISTS.

MR. FAWCETT, and the PERFORMERS of Covent-Garden Theatre.

Mr. Fawcett—" My Lord, and Gentlemen, I rise to return thanks for the honour conferred on me and my brother Performers. Next to the pleasure of receiving the applauses of a good-natured audience at Covent-garden, the approbation of this splendid assembly, which I now address, is most grateful to my heart. I and my fellow Performers do not take any pride to ourselves for the plan which led to the meeting this day; but we feel the honour done to our Brother, in the inmost recesses of our hearts. I am sure no soldier that traced the doubtful field of Waterloo, felt more for his *General* than we do for ours. He is about to give up his command; but he has done great good while he held it; and his example, I am convinced, will not be forgotten. He has left an indelible impression behind him. To him the Actor is obliged for raising his profession to a degree of respectability which it never before possessed. They will keep their eyes steadily fixed on the example left them, and though few can hope to rival him as an Actor, yet all may endeavour to achieve that enviable character which he so highly possesses—the character of an honest and good man!"

Mr. RAE, and the PERFORMERS of Drury-Lane Theatre.

Mr. Rae rose—" My Lord, being the medium to receive the compliment which you have just paid to the Drury-lane Company, I feel wholly distrustful of my ability duly to acknowledge the honour; and after the very able manner in which a similar compliment to the Sister Theatre has been acknowledged by its worthy Manager, I shall only express a hope that it may be believed, we fully participate in those general sentiments of admiration and respect, which have this day been so warmly manifested towards Mr. Kemble, by men of the most exalted rank, talent, and science: And we shall ever reflect with pride, that on *our boards*, Mr. Kemble commenced that career which he has now so splendidly terminated."

Lord Holland expressed his satisfaction at witnessing the liberality of sentiment which pervaded the two Winter Theatres, rivals as they were in some respects; and was glad of this opportunity publicly to declare, how much the late lamented Mr. Whitbread considered himself obliged by the liberality with which Mr. Kemble had materially assisted his efforts, for the re-establishment of the affairs of Drury-lane Theatre. But he was sure the liberality of Englishmen would not be confined to their own country. They had now an Actor of a neighbouring nation amongst them. His Lordship was happy that they were all eager to express their gratification at this circumstance. He should, therefore, propose the Health of

M. TALMA, and Success to the FRENCH STAGE.

M. Talma—" Gentlemen, it is impossible, in a foreign language, to express my warm gratitude for the hospitalities of your country—and the distinction with which you treat the French Drama. To be thought worthy of notice, on an occasion consecrated to my dear

Friend Kemble, I consider one of the highest honours of my life. Gentlemen! as I cannot thank you with my words, I trust you will forgive me for thanking you only with my heart, and permit me to fill my glass to

The BRITISH NATION, and the BRITISH STAGE."

The ROYAL ACADEMY, and its worthy PRESIDENT, Mr. WEST.

Mr. West—" My Lord, in the name of the Royal Academy, and for myself, permit me to thank you for the flattering kindness which has prompted you to wish success to the one, and health to the other. The attentions of persons like your Lordship, and the high and brilliant characters which compose this Assembly, are among the noblest incentives with which Artists can be honoured; and permit me to assure you, my Lord, that it is impossible for my mind to receive a higher gratification, or the Academy a more acceptable tribute, than both derive from being thus noticed by such society, and upon such an occasion."

Mr. YOUNG, the Reciter of the ODE.

Mr. Young—" My Lord, the honor which you have just conferred upon me, was unexpected—but not the less grateful to me, and I thank you cordially. I have felt myself very highly flattered, to be selected as the person who was considered eligible upon such an occasion to recite the Ode, which, though admirable for its numerous poetic beauties, is not less so for the truthfulness of its panygeric. No man is more indebted to the example of Mr. Kemble than myself, whether he be considered in his public or his private character; and I am sensible it is very much to the influence of both upon me,

and the indulgence of the Public, that I am indebted for whatever success I have been so fortunate as to obtain. It is my firm conviction, that lasting reputation is only to be obtained at the price which Mr. Kemble has paid for it, which has been a steady, unremitting application, as well to the theory as the practice of his Art; and I consider it as an imperious duty towards them, whose approbation has given me the little reputation I possess, to tread in the steps of so illustrious a master as Mr. Kemble."

MRS. SIDDONS.

Mr. Horace Twiss—" It becomes me to state, as my apology for addressing your Lordship and this assembly, that I do so at the especial desire of Mrs. Siddons, who, understanding that this honour was designed for her, requested that I would return her most grateful acknowledgments. Your Lordship has observed how frail are the materials of the Actor's work. His exertions, unlike those of other artists, perish even in the moment of their birth: no scroll, no canvas, no marble preserves them: but as it were in a mirror, " they come like shadows, so depart." It is only, therefore, from the impression which the powers of great tragedians have produced on the acknowledged judges of their own time, that posterity can obtain any distinct criterion of their deserts; and most splendidly has contemporary opinion to-day attested and recorded the excellence of its favourites, in this thronged attendance, and pervading enthusiasm of an assembly so distinguished in every various walk of talent and of taste. I will only add, that if there be terms which can, more forcibly and feelingly than any others, convey to such an auditory the

deep sense which Mrs. Siddons will always retain of the honour and kindness now conferred upon her, those are the terms which, could she herself have been present, she would have selected, to express the thanks I but attempt so imperfectly to offer in her name."

Mr. Mathews being now requested to favour the Company with a song, gave "The Nightingale Club."

The next Toast given was,

MR. FLAXMAN, the Designer of the Vase.

Mr. Flaxman—"My Lord, whatever merit you may have pleased to ascribe to my humble effort on this occasion, I am aware it will derive its greatest value from the worth and dignity of the man whose name it is meant to perpetuate. And I feel much gratified, that as the Designer of the present tribute, my name will hereafter be associated with that of the object of this day's commemoration."

Mr. Incledon was next called upon to gratify the Company with his celebrated song, "Cease, rude Boreas," &c.

Lord Holland then gave,

THE COMMITTEE.

Mr. Mathews—"In the name of my brother Committee-men, and for myself, I rise to return you our sincere thanks for the honour you have just conferred on us. In assuring you of the gratification I feel, I am confident I am conveying to you the feelings of us all. I have been appointed by them to this pleasing, yet difficult task, perhaps rather unwisely; for though not

one of us can feel more than I do, there is not one among us, that could not have expressed those feelings in a much better way. I shall not long intrude upon your attention, but I must be permitted to say a few words respecting the situation of the Committee on this proud, and gratifying occasion. I hope it will not be understood that we arrogate to ourselves any particular distinction. No, we have all present, but one motive, one object, that of paying a tribute of respect to the eminent individual, who has this day honoured us with his company: but perhaps some small portion of vanity and exultation will be pardoned in us, (and which indeed if you blame us for, we cannot help indulging), when we reflect, that it was with us the idea of this day's meeting originated: particularly when we look at the party present, distinguished as it is, by a large portion of the highest rank and finest talent in the country, who have spontaneously joined, to bear a part in the scene, and who expressed a wish to that effect, the moment our intentions were made known; and all this without one having recourse to an advertisement, or any of the usual means resorted to on public occasions. Had we not limited our numbers, I speak with confidence, that so great was the sensation excited, that had our room been as long as the Waterloo Bridge, it would have been filled, without the attraction of its novelty. Much has been said, and justly said, in praise of our eminent guest, and were I disposed to be oratorical, I might complain: I might exclaim, It is really hard upon me, that nothing is left for me to say: but to one point, I beg leave to speak individually. I am an Actor; I love my profession, and all those who do honour to it; and none but an Actor can properly appreciate all the service Mr. Kemble has done us. The Public owe him their respect

and thanks, for the good he has done the Drama generally; but for the particular services he has rendered us, whether with respect to its increased estimation with the Public, or the excellent regulations introduced under his able management, he is entitled to the gratitude and affection of his cotemporaries. We all feel, I am sure, the same regret, when we consider the loss the public will suffer by his retreat; but our expressions to-day, as far as regard himself, I must take the liberty of saying, have partaken rather too much of the penseroso. For my part, I cannot but congratulate him on being able honourably to retire from, at best, a precarious profession; full of difficulties, of toils and anxieties; and I sincerely hope, that he may live long to enjoy as much happiness in private life, as he has afforded us, who have witnessed his admirable professional exertions. My Friend, Mr. Fawcett, has distinguished him as our General—I shall, with permission, give him higher rank. I am a loyal Actor—I know where my allegiance is due, and the favours and honours you have bestowed on my Dramatic *Sovereign*, (for so *I* must call him), this day, have been delightfully gratifying to me, and I am sure to all my brethren present. Gentlemen, I must apologize for having so long trespassed upon your time: once more I return you our thanks, for the honour you have done us, and beg leave to drink all your healths."

The last Toast drank by the Company was,

THE LADIES.

A little before twelve o'clock, the Noble Chairman and his Guest rose to depart. As Mr. Kemble went down the room, the Company pressed upon him, to grasp his hand as he passed,

in token of their regard for him, and regret at the idea of seeing him no more.

A Cast of Shakspeare, from the monument in Stratford Church, borrowed from the Proprietors of the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden, for the occasion, had been placed over the President's Chair, as an appropriate ornament to an entertainment, given in honour of so illustrious a votary of its great original; and as Mr. Kemble retired from the figure, the Company appeared to feel, that it was more than an ideal separation between the Poet and the Actor, and to think, that as the latter withdrew from the image of the Bard, his compositions would lose a prop of their fame, in the absence of so intelligent an expositor.

Unlike the conclusion of other public festivals, where noise and intemperance generally succeed the specific purpose of the day, the Company spontaneously rose at the moment of Mr. Kemble's withdrawing, and after filling a bumper to his future health and enjoyment, withdrew from the scene of their hospitalities, convinced that there remained no spur to conviviality after his departure.

Thus terminated one of the proudest days the Profession ever witnessed, in this or any other country; reflecting equal honour on the merit that deserved, and the feeling that suggested the celebration.

A few days after the Dinner, the following Poem, reprinted with considerable alterations from Mr. Taylor's Poem, called The Stage, appeared in the Sun Newspaper, and is inserted here by the Author's permission.

THEATRICAL PORTRAIT

OF

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE, ESQ.

To close in order due our long career,
See Kemble march, majestic and severe;
Fraught with uncommon pow'rs of form and face,
He comes the pomp of Tragedy to grace.

Fertile in genius, and matur'd by art,
Not soft to steal, but stern to seize the heart,
In mould of figure, and in frame of mind,
To him th' heroic sphere must be assign'd.

August or daring he adorns the Stage—
The gloomy subtlety, the savage rage,
The scornful menace, and the cynic ire,
The hardy valour, and the patriot fire—
These shew the vigour of a master's hand,
And o'er the feelings give him firm command;
As *Richard*, *Timon*, and *Macbeth*, proclaim,
Or stern *Coriolanus'* nobler aim.

Nor fierce alone, for well his pow'rs can shew
Calm declamation and attemper'd woe;
The virtuous *Duke* who sway awhile declines,
Yet checks the *Deputy*'s abhorr'd designs,
And, in the sov'reign or the saintly guise,
Benevolently just, and meekly wise:

The *Dane*, bewailing now a father's fate,
Now deeply pond'ring man's mysterious state;
Tender and dignify'd, alike are seen—
The philosophic mind and princely mien.

When merely tender, he appears too cold;
Or rather fashion'd in too rough a mould:
Nor fitted love in softer form to wear,
But strong with pride, or madd'ning with despair;
As when the lost *Octavian*'s murmurs flow
In full luxuriance of romantic woe.
Yet where *Orlando* cheers desponding age,
Or the sweet wiles of *Rosalind* engage,
We own, that manly graces finely blend
The tender lover, and the soothing friend.

Though Nature was so prodigally kind
In the bold lineaments of form and mind,
As if to check a fond excess of pride,
The pow'rs of voice she scantily supply'd:
Oft, when the hurricanes of passion rise,
For correspondent tones he vainly tries;
To aid the storm, no tow'ring note combines,
And the spent breath th' unequal task declines.
Yet, spite of Nature, he compels us still
To own the potent triumph of his skill,
While, with dread pauses, deepen'd accents roll,
Whose awful energies arrest the soul.

At times, perchance, the spirit of the scene,
Th' impassion'd accent, and impressive mien,
May lose their wonted force, while, too refin'd,
He strives by niceties to strike the mind:
For action too precise, inclin'd to pore,
And labour for a point unknown before;
Untimely playing thus the Critic's part,
To gain the head, when he should smite the heart.

Yet still must candour, on reflection, own
Some useful comment had been shrewdly shewn;
Nor here let puny malice vent its gall,
And texts with skill restor'd *new readings* call;
Kemble, for Actors, nobly led the way,
And prompted them to think as well as play.

With cultur'd sense, and with experience sage,
Patient he cons the time-disfigur'd page,
Hence oft we see him with success explore,
And clear the dross from rich poetic ore,
Trace, through the maze of diction, passion's clue,
And open latent character to view.

Though for the muse of Tragedy design'd,
In form, in features, passions, and in mind,
Yet would he fain the Comic Nymph embrace,
Who seldom without awe beholds his face.
Whene'er he tries the airy and the gay,
Judgment, not genius, marks the cold essay;
But in a graver province he can please
With well-bred spirit, and with manly ease.
When genuine wit, with satire's active force,
And faithful love pursues its gen'rous course,
There in his *Valentine*, might Congreve view,
Th' embody'd portrait, vig'rous, warm, and true.

Nor let us, with unhallow'd touch, presume
To pluck one sprig of laurel from the tomb;
Yet with due rev'rence for the mighty dead,
'Tis just the fame of living worth to spread:
And could the noblest vet'rans now appear,
Kemble might keep his state, devoid of fear;
Still, while observant of his proper line,
With native lustre as a rival shine.

APPENDIX.

(A).

Worcester, February 12th, 1767.

Mr. Kemble's Company of Comedians.

At the Theatre, at the King's Head, this Evening, will be performed, A CONCERT OF MUSICK, to begin exactly at Six o'Clock.

Tickets to be had at the usual places.

Between the parts of the CONCERT, will be presented, *gratis*, a Celebrated Historical Play, (never performed here), called

KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

The Characters to be dressed in ancient habits, according to the fashion of those times.

The part of *King Charles,*	Mr. Jones.
Duke of Richmond, ...	Mr. Siddons.
Marquis of Lindsay, ...	Mr. Salisbury.
Bishop Juxon, ...	Mr. Fowler.
General Fairfax, ...	Mr. Kemble.
Colonel Ireton, ...	Mr. Crump.
Colonel Tomlinson, ...	Mr. Hughes.
The part of *Oliver Cromwell,*	Mr. Vaughan.
Servant, ...	Mr. Butler.

James, Duke of York, (afterwards King of England), Master J. KEMBLE.

The *Duke of Gloucester,* (King Charles's younger Son), Miss Fanny Kemble.

Serjeant Bradshaw, (Judge of the pretended High Court of Justice), Mr. Burton.

The young *Princess Elizabeth,* Miss Kemble.

Lady Fairfax, Mrs. Kemble.

The part of the *Queen,* Mrs. Vaughan.

Singing between the Acts by Mrs. Fowler, and Miss Kemble.

To which will be added, a Comedy, called

THE MINOR.

And on Saturday next, the 14th inst. will be again presented the above Tragedy, with a Farce that will be expressed in the Bills for that day.

⁂ The days of Performance, are Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

(B).

The following, we believe, to be an accurate List of Mr. Kemble's Literary Productions, original, translated, altered, and adapted to the Stage.

ORIGINAL.

FUGITIVE PIECES—A small Volume of Poems, 1780.

BELISARIUS, a Tragedy, acted at York, 1778; never printed.

FEMALE OFFICER, a Farce, afterwards called the *Projects*, 1779; never printed.

MACBETH RECONSIDERED, an Essay, &c. 8vo. 1786.

MACBETH AND KING RICHARD THE THIRD, an Essay, &c. crown 8vo. 1817.

TRANSLATED.

LODOISKA, a Musical Drama, from the French, 1794.

ALTERED.

OH! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, from the *Comedy of Errors*, 1780; never printed.

PANNEL, a Farce, from Bickerstaff's Comedy, "*It's Well it's no Worse*, 8vo. 1788.

FARM-HOUSE, a Comedy, from Charles Johnson's *Country Lasses*, 8vo. 1789.

LOVE IN MANY MASKS, a Comedy, from the First Part of Mrs. Behn's Rover, 8vo. 1790.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, a Pantomime, 8vo. 1795.

CELADON AND FLORIMEL; or, The Happy Counterplot; a Comedy, from Cibber's *Comical Lovers*, 1796; never printed.

ADAPTED TO THE STAGE.

All's Well that Ends Well, 8vo.
As You Like It, 8vo.
Cymbeline, 8vo.
Coriolanus, 8vo.
Cato, 8vo.
Comedy of Errors, 8vo.
Double Dealer, 8vo.
De Montfort; never printed.
False Friend, 8vo.; never printed.
Henry IV. Part I. 8vo.
——— Part II. 8vo.
Henry V. 8vo.
Henry VIII. 8vo.
Hamlet, 8vo.
Julius Cæsar, 8vo.
King Lear, 8vo.
King John, 8vo.
Katharine and Petruchio, 8vo.
Maid of Honour; never printed.
Merchant of Venice, 8vo.
Merry Wives of Windsor, 8vo.
Much Ado about Nothing, 8vo.
Macbeth, 8vo.
Measure for Measure, 8vo.
New Way to Pay Old Debts, 8vo.
Othello, 8vo.
Plain Dealer, 8vo.
Richard III. 8vo.
Romeo and Juliet, 8vo.
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, 8vo.
Revenge, 8vo.
Tempest, 8vo.
Twelfth Night, 8vo.
Two Gentlemen of Verona, 8vo.
Venice Preserved, 8vo.
Winter's Tale, 8vo.
Way of the World, 8vo.

*** *The greater part of the Pieces last enumerated, have been collected, with several additional Dramas, and published by* Miller, *Bow-street, Covent-garden, under the title of* A Select British Theatre, *revised by* Mr. Kemble.

(C).

"Mr. Kemble, the celebrated Actor of London, whose arrival at Paris has been announced by the papers, possesses a fine figure, and appears to be about forty years of age: his hair is dark, his features strongly marked, with a physiognomy truly tragic. He understands, and speaks with accuracy, the French language. In company he appears thoughtful and reserved. His manners, however, are very distinguished, and he has in his looks, when addressed, an expression of courtesy, that affords us the best idea of his education. Mr. Kemble is well informed, and has the reputation of being a good grammarian, which distinguishes him from other English Actors, who are more attentive to attitude than to diction. The Comedie Française has received him with all the respect due to the Le Kaim of England; they have already given him a splendid dinner, and mean to invite him to a still more brilliant *souper*. Talma, to whom he had letters of recommendation, does the honours of Paris; they visit together our finest works, and appear to be already united by the most friendly ties. Mr. Kemble thinks our theatrical declamation too remote from Nature; but confesses that some of our Actors have great talents. Previous to his leaving Paris, they talk of playing *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. This truly French gallantry will have the double advantage of doing honour to a whole people, in the person of their most celebrated tragedian, and of drawing great houses."—(*Extract from a French Paper*).

(D).

To the Duke of Northumberland.

"MY LORD DUKE,

"BE pleased to accept this tribute of my gratitude. That it is the constant character of your Grace's nature, to conceal the benefits it confers, I well know; and I am fearful lest this offering should offend, where I most anxiously wish it to be received with favour; yet when a whole happy tenantry are voting public monuments, to perpetuate the memory of your Grace's paternal benevolence to them; I hope, my Lord, that I am not any longer forbidden openly to acknowledge my own great obligations to your munificence.

"Your Grace has thought me worthy of your bountiful patronage; and I may not presume to say how little I deserve it." &c. &c. &c.—*(Vide Dedication of Macbeth and Richard the Third, an Essay, published by Murray).*

(E).

Poetical Address, written by Walter Scott, Esq.

As the worn war-horse, at the trumpet's sound,
Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws the ground;
Disdains the ease his generous lord assigns,
And longs to rush on the embattled lines;
So I, your plaudits ringing on mine ear,
Can scarce sustain to think our parting near;
To think my scenic hour for ever past,
And that those valued plaudits, are my last.

But years steal on; and higher duties crave
Some space between the theatre and grave;
That, like the Roman in the Capitol,
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall:

My life's brief act in public service flown,
The last, the closing scene, must be my own.

Here, then, adieu! while yet some well-graced parts
May fix an ancient favourite in your hearts,
Not quite to be forgotten, even when
You look on better Actors, younger men:
And if your bosoms own this kindly debt
Of old remembrance, how shall mine forget?—
O, how forget!—how oft I hither came
In anxious hope, how oft returned with fame!
How oft around your circle, this weak hand
Has waved immortal Shakspeare's magic wand,
Till the full burst of inspiration came,
And I have felt, and you have fann'd the flame!
By mem'ry treasured, while her reign endures,
These hours must live—and all their claims are your's.

O favoured land! renowned for arts and arms,
For manly talent, and for female charms,
Could this full bosom prompt the sinking line,
What fervent benedictions now were thine!
But my last part is play'd, my knell is rung,
When e'en your praise falls faltering from my tongue;
And all that you can hear, or I can tell,
Is—Friends and Patrons, hail, and FARE YOU WELL!

(F).

Mr. Kemble's last Night.

For the Benefit of Mr. Kemble.

Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden.

This present Monday, June 23, 1817, will be acted, Shakspeare's Tragedy of

Coriolanus; or, The Roman Matron.

Romans:

Caius Marcius Coriolanus, ... Mr. Kemble,
(Being the last time of his appearing on the Stage).

The Child, Miss Parsloe—*Cominius,* Mr. Chapman—*Menenius,* Mr. Blanchard—*Fulvius,* Mr. Jefferies—*Appius,* Mr. T. Matthews.

Tribunes of the People:

Sicinius, Mr. Barrymore—*Brutus,* Mr. Murray.

Citizens: Mr. Simmons, Mr. Atkins, Mr. Howell, Mr. Menage.

Volumnia, Mrs. Faucit—*Virgilia,* Miss Foote—*Valeria,* Miss Green—*Servilia,* Mrs. Coates.

Matrons and Virgins: Mesdames Bologna, Chipp, Grimaldi, Heath, Louis, S. Mori, Norman, Robinson, Sexton, Watts.

In Act II. An Ovation.

With the full Chorus, "See the Conquering Hero comes."

By Messrs. Crumpton, Everard, George, Guissart, Higman, Lee, Linton, Norris, I. Terry, I. S. and C. Tett, Tinney, Watson, Williams. Mesds. Bishop, Carew, Findlay, Herbert, Hibbert, Iliff, Liston, M'Alpine, Matthews, Mortram, Sterling, West, Whitmore.

Volcians: Tullus Aufidius, Mr. Egerton—*Volusius,* Mr. Claremont—*Sextus,* Mr. Penn—*Lucius,* Mr. King—*Navius,* Mr. Grant—*Arnus,* Mr. Sutton.

The Publick are respectfully informed, that, for the accommodation of a number of Ladies and Gentlemen who have not been able to procure places in the Boxes, the Orchestra will, for this evening, be occupied by a part of the Audience, and the Symphonies between the Acts be played behind the Scenes.

To which will be added, the Farce of the

Portrait of Cervantes; or, The Plotting Lovers.

Murillo, Mr. Emery—*Don Carlos,* Mr. Connor—*Don Guzman,* Mr. Jefferies—*Scipio,* Mr. Blanchard—*Sancho,* Mr. Liston—*Father Benito,* Mr. Atkins.

Alguazils—Messrs. Goodwin, Louis, Platt, Sutton, White.

Lucetta, Mrs. Gibbs—*Isabella,* Miss Carew.

Finis.

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